



Security Council

Sixty-third year

Provisional

6016th meeting

Friday, 14 November 2008, 10 a.m.

New York

President:	Mr. Urbina / Mr. Ballesterro	(Costa Rica)
Members:	Belgium	Mr. Grauls
	Burkina Faso	Mr. Kafando
	China	Mr. La Yifan
	Croatia	Mr. Jurica
	France	Mr. Ripert
	Indonesia	Mr. Natalegawa
	Italy	Mr. Terzi di Sant'Agata
	Libyan Arab Jamahiriya	Mr. Ettalhi
	Panama	Mr. Arias
	Russian Federation	Mr. Churkin
	South Africa	Mr. Laher
	United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland	Sir John Sawers
	United States of America	Mr. Khalilzad
	Viet Nam	Mr. Le Luong Minh

Agenda

The situation concerning Iraq

Report of the Secretary-General pursuant to paragraph 6 of resolution 1830 (2008)
(S/2008/688)

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The meeting was called to order at 10.10 a.m.

Adoption of the agenda

The agenda was adopted.

The situation concerning Iraq

Report of the Secretary-General pursuant to paragraph 6 of resolution 1830 (2008) (S/2008/688)

The President (*spoke in Spanish*): I should like to inform the Council that I have received a letter from the representative of Iraq, in which he requests to be invited to participate in the consideration of the item on the Council's agenda. In conformity with the usual practice, I propose, with the consent of the Council, to invite that representative to participate in the consideration of the item without the right to vote, in accordance with the relevant provisions of the Charter and rule 37 of the Council's provisional rules of procedure.

There being no objection, it is so decided.

At the invitation of the President, Mr. Al Bayati (Iraq) took a seat at the Council table.

The President (*spoke in Spanish*): In accordance with the understanding reached in the course of the Council's prior consultations, I shall take it that the Security Council agrees to extend an invitation, under rule 39 of its provisional rules of procedure, to Mr. Staffan de Mistura, Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Iraq.

It is so decided.

The Security Council will now begin its consideration of the item on its agenda. The Council is meeting in accordance with the understanding reached in its prior consultations.

Members of the Council have before them document S/2008/688, which contains the report of the Secretary-General pursuant to paragraph 6 of resolution 1830 (2008).

At this meeting, the Security Council will hear briefings by Mr. Staffan de Mistura, Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Iraq, and Mr. Zalmay Khalilzad, Permanent Representative of the United States of America, on behalf of the Multinational Force.

I now give the floor to Mr. Staffan de Mistura, Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Iraq.

Mr. De Mistura: I am pleased to appear before the Council today, just over a year since I assumed my duties in Baghdad, to present the fifth quarterly report on behalf of the Secretary-General (S/2008/688).

With a robust mandate reconfirmed by resolution 1830 (2008) and at the request of the Government of Iraq, the focus of the United Nations Assistance Mission for Iraq (UNAMI) in 2008 has been in the areas that could support Iraq's efforts towards political dialogue and national reconciliation. That was largely achieved in recent months by supporting electoral preparations, sowing the seeds for a resolution to disputed internal boundaries, supporting the national development strategies and facilitating Iraq's partnership with the international community and, indeed, its neighbours.

The past year was dedicated to identifying opportunities in the priority areas where we would most likely be able together to achieve timely results. Next year will be the time to consolidate the progress that has been made so far. We have to move forward from the initiatives that, as a matter of urgency, have served as an entry point for those in going forward to solidifying longer-term gains.

Let us for a moment look at the context in Iraq these days. The summer and fall have witnessed, despite some occasional spikes — and we have again seen some in the past few days — a steady reduction in the levels of violence in Iraq. That is unquestionable, in spite of the spikes, and we may see more in the forthcoming months, but we should look at the broader picture, which is that security has improved. A handful of rockets have impacted on the International Zone since last May, whereas in May there were 30 blasts a day. The truce declared by Moqtada al-Sadr has been observed and extended. The reported Iraqi casualties for October 2008 throughout Iraq were the lowest since March 2003 — and, of course, they are never too low. Any level of civilian casualty will always remain condemnable, regrettable and sad, but the fact remains that it is now at its lowest.

The Government of Iraq has taken over responsibility for many issues in Iraq, including the Awakening Councils and payment of tens of thousands of their members. Some sectors of the Iraqi security

forces have greatly improved — we have seen it with our own eyes when we have been travelling in Iraq — in their professionalism and performance. However, the reporting period saw also some political tensions as a result of the initial stalemate over the provincial elections law in July and the issues of minority representation in the elections.

Iraq is now entering a very delicate electoral period, in which every small security gain likely to give space to political dialogue should be built upon, in order to avoid any violence linked to the provincial elections of 31 January 2009. The confrontation in Khanaqin during the summer months and the spike in anti-Christian violence in Mosul are only two examples of a situation that could have undermined the hard-earned progress made by the Iraqi leadership to bridge their differences and further an Iraqi-owned and Iraqi-led democratic process.

Electoral assistance has been our flagship in recent months, and, of all our activities, is likely to be so in the forthcoming ones. It is our firm duty as the United Nations and an integral part of our mandate to assist the Iraqis and the Independent High Electoral Commission, the Iraqi institution responsible for preparing and conducting the elections, with a series of electoral events, starting with provincial elections in the immediate future — January 2009 — and culminating in the parliamentary elections between the end of 2009 and early 2010. The elections law, providing for countrywide elections in 14 out of 18 governorates, is the most important piece of legislation enacted in that period. The law was adopted on 24 September and required a major push by UNAMI to break the impasse in Parliament over the inclusion of an amendment on Kirkuk. Finally, it was possible to broker an even-handed resolution.

The Government of Iraq and the Parliament of Iraq should be commended for that, because it is a major achievement. Even following its ratification, the election law suffered a second difficult moment when the article accounting for minority representation of Christians, Yazidis, Shebek and Sabean Mandeans in some provincial councils was dropped at the last minute. That unfortunately produced intimidation and tension — particularly in the context of the volatile area of Mosul — and risked unravelling both the electoral law and the electoral timelines, and ultimately jeopardizing the principle of minority rights, which in Iraq is an important principle recognized by everyone.

With the aim of reducing growing tension and the temptation to resort to intimidation or to force displacement of minority populations, UNAMI put forward a proposal on the allocation of seats for minorities in provincial councils. The proposal also provided for political recognition of some groups which have undergone severe campaigns of targeted violence and assimilation in the past. It is important to remember what happened to the Yazidis in 2007 or to the Christians very recently.

Following several rounds of consultations over the span of two weeks, the Council of Representatives decided on 3 November to allocate specific seats for representatives of Iraq's minority components on the provincial councils in Baghdad, Ninawa and Basra. The decision to secure minority representation in Iraq is a positive achievement in its own right. Although it must be admitted that the adopted amendment to the electoral law did not entirely reflect UNAMI's formulation of numbers, it did include some of its crucial elements. Its adoption by a majority open vote was a demonstration of democracy in action — in Iraq that is a very positive development — and contributed to furthering respect for human rights and democracy. Both principles are strengthened through the commitment of Iraqi institutions to recognize and guarantee minority representation in their elected governing bodies. That is only a "seed representation" which can open the door for improved guarantees of minority rights in the future; but the door has been opened.

The Presidency Council's green light — a decision taken recently — completed the elections law without either compromising or endangering their overall timetable. In other words, the electoral law is confirmed, including its minority component.

Public interest in the voter registration update in September and general satisfaction with the passage of the elections law appear to confirm a grassroots desire to have a say on who should be represented on the provincial councils. The Iraqi people want the elections. The forthcoming elections are rightly viewed as an opportunity to establish a more inclusive sectarian balance and shape a new political landscape. They represent the most significant political event in the forthcoming months. It is therefore all the more important to ensure that they be perceived as free and fair, and that the Iraqis, with the support of the United Nations and the international community, will be able

to ensure respect for operational timelines and that the Electoral Commission will be free of political pressure.

The good news is that the electoral timelines are now broadly on track, with candidate nomination concluded on 2 November and the swift inclusion of minority candidates in the Electoral Commission ballot lottery having taken place on 6 November. UNAMI continues to support the Electoral Commission in technical preparations, including the printing and procurement of materials, planning and logistics, public outreach, consultations with security forces to ensure that governorate elections are conducted in safety, putting anti-fraud measures in place, and training national staff. We are working to remove any outstanding operational hurdles, and that will be done. Our job is to assist in those efforts together with the Iraqi authorities.

All sides should be encouraged to avoid the temptation to manipulate the electoral process or to create any incentives for intimidation before or during the polling day. The Electoral Commission, supported by UNAMI, has trained 42,785 local observers and is working with the Minister of Education to employ approximately 270,000 teachers, clerks and headmasters to assist on polling day. The Prime Minister has wisely decided to postpone school examinations in order to allow the schools and the teachers to be available on that important day.

Mitigating measures to reduce the potential for electoral fraud should ideally be matched by some form of close monitoring, particularly in sensitive areas of the north, and we are currently exploring some feasible options. Security, of course, will also be an element we cannot ignore. However, the main burden for ensuring transparency of the elections rests with the Iraqi national observers and party agents. They have been invited to be present at polling stations on the day of the elections.

Concerning Kirkuk and the so-called disputed internal boundaries or territories, the recent targeted killings and the displacement of Christians in the area of the northern faultlines illustrate the complicated connections between minority rights, the electoral process and disputed boundaries. UNAMI is pursuing its work on those issues in accordance with the mandate given to it by the Security Council.

In Kirkuk, which has been under relative calm in recent weeks, our activities have been wide-ranging.

They comprise research on conditions in the area and include various possible options for its future administrative status, humanitarian, reconstruction and human rights programmes and, at the request of the Speaker of Parliament, Mr. Mashhadani, technical assistance to a Committee that has just been established by Parliament to make recommendations on special arrangements for future Kirkuk elections. Those elections will not take place in January with the other elections, but later on after the Committee has finished its job, which is expected to be at the end of March. At that time UNAMI will assist with the Kirkuk elections at the request of the Iraqi Parliament.

In parallel, we have advanced our analysis on the last phase of all of the other 15 faultline districts in northern Iraq — from the Syrian to the Iranian border — concluding our community consultations in the Ninawa, Diyala and Salahaddin governorates.

We believe that UNAMI's analysis will provide options for intercommunal confidence-building measures. We are probably now considered, through that research and in that context, to be the most detailed experts on those areas because there has been a lot of work. Seventeen of my colleagues have been working on a full-time basis for the last eight months on that project. Confidence-building measures should be in place in order to facilitate an overall political agreement between the various affected communities. This is not a referendum or a fait accompli, but a political agreement.

UNAMI supports renewed efforts by the Constitutional Review Committee to enshrine an agreement dealing with competing visions of Iraq's federal framework, as well as with hydrocarbons and viable revenue and water-sharing agreements. While we remain poised to present our work to the Iraqi leadership, we are mindful not to complicate matters by presenting the results of our work prematurely, since the elections are drawing closer and are a priority. Later we can come up with our proposals. Let us first complete the elections.

As to human rights, the UNAMI Human Rights Office continues to balance its ongoing monitoring and protection activities with emerging human rights challenges arising from elections, the resolution of the disputed territories, including the recent displacement of Christians, the forcible sale of property in Ninawa, or minority representation. We will continue to devote

significant attention to the legislative process related to human rights and the rule of law, and to establishing important institutions related to human rights, such as a national human rights commission in Iraq. We will also maintain our strong support, in the form of capacity-building, for the work of the Ministry of Human Rights of Iraq, led by a very courageous woman.

In the area of international partnership, Iraq has made important strides in its re-engagement with the international community, primarily through the International Compact with Iraq — which is strongly supported by my friend and colleague Ambassador Gambari — and the ad hoc support mechanism within the Iraqi Ministry of Foreign Affairs. Both are facilitating venues for cooperation on concrete issues, such as refugees, the resumption of diplomatic relations and anti-corruption measures, in a spirit of partnership and equal standing.

The very successful Stockholm meeting — and we should thank the Government of Sweden for having facilitated it — ended with a message on the need for partnership and co-financing. Greater Iraqi ownership, the fact that the Compact has drawn the attention of the Prime Minister — who attended the meeting and, I understand, was impressed by its results — and the Prime Minister's appointment of his own Adviser as part of the Advisory Committee have created additional impetus to the follow-up to the Compact. Iraq has also become a signatory to the Paris Declaration, signalling its desire for more transparent management of its aid strategy. Meanwhile, donors are increasingly focusing on reducing aid budgets — Iraq is a rich country, a fact of which it is aware and proud — in favour of capacity-building aimed at Iraqi self-reliance.

The regional dialogue front is a promising area for 2009 and has seen signs of very promising movement in 2008. We have seen considerable progress in view of the fact that several Arab countries have reopened their embassies in Baghdad and that a number of high-level visits have taken place in recent months. UNAMI continues to be engaged through the Ministry of Foreign Affairs' ad hoc support mechanism unit, which is building its institutional capacity to support those processes. Planning is under way for ministerial meetings in the coming weeks. Meetings of the working group on energy and of the ministers of the interior have taken place in Istanbul and Amman, and preparations are under way for meetings of the working groups on refugees and border security, to be

held in November in Amman and Damascus, respectively.

Good-faith initiatives to support Iraq's bilateral relations, on issues such as technical border demarcation, security, de-mining and missing persons, go a long way, in terms of political mileage, towards restoring a spirit of cooperation. UNAMI has been and will continue to be proactively involved in assisting and facilitating such goodwill measures.

Iraq is reaching a critical point in its recovery and reconstruction. Unavoidably, with improved security comes a growing demand from the people to meet the basic needs of ordinary Iraqis, including jobs and services. It is on that basis that the Iraqi people will judge their own authorities and that the electorate will hold local representatives accountable.

Across Iraq, signs of normal daily life are increasingly visible; I myself see them every time I cross into what we call the "red zone" in Baghdad. In Baghdad, once the site of some of Iraq's worst violence, we see shops and businesses reopening and even remaining open at night. More than 60,000 Iraqis have returned home this year. Food insecurity has declined from 15 per cent in 2005 to 3 per cent in 2007 and 2008. In other words, there is much less food insecurity now than there was just one year ago.

However, let us also be frank: life is not improving equally for all Iraqis. Many still feel the impact of the past conflict and of chronic neglect dating back to the 1990s. Major infrastructure and service delivery problems are still challenging. Employment opportunities have not grown along with oil revenues, keeping some Iraqis in poverty. In pockets of Iraq today, less than a third of the population receives basic water services and not enough children attend school. But we know that the Government is seriously focusing on those areas and planning to use its increased resources for them.

A rising number of internally displaced persons — increasing from 16,000 in June to 35,000 in August — are beginning to return home, signalling increased confidence in Iraq's stability. However, Government action is still required in order to make sure that conditions are in place to guarantee safe returns, in which case we will probably see more of them. In order to fill critical humanitarian gaps in-country and to support Iraqi refugees abroad until the necessary conditions exist for returns in safety and

dignity, a subregional humanitarian appeal for Iraq in 2009 will be launched next week.

Better security and high oil revenues mean that the Iraqi Government is increasingly able and willing to address national development issues. I would therefore urge the Government to continue its effort to allocate national resources in 2009, even in the current uncertain financial climate worldwide — which also applies to Iraq — in order to maintain the momentum for recovery. Iraq has entered into a new cooperation framework for United Nations assistance through 2010, shifting the focus from investing in infrastructure to helping to mobilize its own substantial resources.

Whereas the Government of Iraq is hindered by a large public sector, which has grown from 1 million to 2.5 million people since 2005, the private sector, which could become a thriving backbone for the Iraqi economy, is still dormant and requires assistance, and there continues to be an insufficient budget execution capacity. In other words, there is a lot of money, but it is not percolating into operational projects. The remainder of the funds of the International Reconstruction Fund Facility for Iraq will therefore be specifically invested in three United Nations initiatives, aimed at public sector reform, private sector development and the decentralization of essential services. The United Nations is also supporting Iraq in reforming its costly public distribution system — food coupons — which consumed \$5.9 billion in national resources in 2008 and can be reformed.

In terms of its footprint, UNAMI has explored ways to increase its level of support for provincial authorities by applying the principles of integrated United Nations missions and an enhanced presence throughout the country, starting with new presences in Najaf, Ramadi, Mosul, Kirkuk and Basra. The Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, the World Health Organization, the World Food Programme, the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs, the United Nations Development Programme, UNICEF, the United Nations Office for Project Services and the International Organization for Migration are the latest agencies to have a permanent senior-level international presence within the country, bring the number of agencies there to more than nine. That is complemented by national staff whom we have appointed as Governorate Liaison Officers and co-located in governors' offices in 10 locations.

In order to pursue and sustain the level of its presence and the extent of its activities, UNAMI obviously requires both security support and protection from the host country and sustained financial and logistical backing from Member States, because security is costly.

The construction of a new integrated compound in Baghdad is key to the continued presence of the United Nations in Iraq. I would therefore like to thank the Government of Iraq for providing a site for the new integrated United Nations compound in Baghdad and particularly welcome the decision taken by the Prime Minister and the Iraqi Council of Ministers on 2 November to make what I understand to be an initial contribution of \$25 million for 2009 towards an estimated total cost of \$89 million for the compound.

Finally, where does all this leave Iraq and its friends? Iraq faces some critical months ahead. In spite of a reduction in the levels of violence, the potential for a flare-up remains a possibility, particularly with regard to the January elections in a year of elections. Iraqis should not relent in seizing the momentum in order to build on the gains attained in 2008.

The Government of Iraq should be commended for the progress achieved so far. It will now be called on to deliver services, security guarantees, conditions for free and fair elections, credible and independent institutions, and to resolve tensions among its various communities. The international community — all of us — should stand firm in its support and constructive re-engagement in this critical period. The United Nations will continue — as the Secretary-General has confirmed — if the Council allows it, to be by the Iraqis' side in this delicate and challenging transition towards stability.

This year is the fifth year since what happened at the Canal Hotel. Many of my friends — our friends — and colleagues died. I think that, for us, it is a matter of principle to prove that we are back and that Iraq is not alone.

The President (*spoke in Spanish*): I thank the Special Representative of the Secretary-General for the information that he has provided to the Council and for the excellent quality of that information.

Mr. Khalilzad (United States of America): I am pleased to report to the Security Council on behalf of the Multinational Force in Iraq (MNF-I). I would like

to begin by thanking Special Representative de Mistura for his briefing on the important work undertaken by the United Nations Assistance Mission for Iraq (UNAMI). Mr. de Mistura's work and the work of his colleagues are critical to cementing the gains we have seen in Iraq, and I wish to extend our appreciation to him and his staff for their hard work and sacrifices. We remain committed to ensuring that UNAMI receives the support necessary to carry out its mission.

This year has been one of significant achievements in which the Iraqi Government, the Iraqi people and the international community can take pride. Yet a lot of work remains to be done. Progress in Iraq is fragile and reversible. It is critical that Iraq receive the continued support and encouragement of the international community as it faces the next set of challenges in rebuilding the country: legitimate and peaceful provincial, district and national elections in 2009; restoring essential services for its people; humanitarian efforts to support the return of approximately 4 million refugees and internally displaced persons; peaceful resolution on the status of disputed internal boundaries, most notably Kirkuk; and, of course, the constitutional review.

Today, I would like to update the Council on the progress that has been achieved.

As mentioned by Mr. de Mistura, the security situation has significantly improved since June 2007. The number of overall attacks has decreased by 86 per cent. Civilian deaths due to violence have decreased by 80 per cent. Iraqi Security Forces deaths have decreased by 84 per cent. United States military deaths in Iraq have decreased by 87 per cent. Coalition military deaths in Iraq have decreased by 88 per cent, and ethno-sectarian deaths have decreased by 95 per cent.

Coalition and Iraqi Security Forces have degraded the capabilities of Al-Qaida in Iraq and militia groups, as is evidenced by the 81 per cent decrease in improvised explosive device (IED) explosions and the 72 per cent decrease in suicide explosions.

A reduction in violence across northern Iraq can be attributed in part to the removal and displacement of key Al-Qaida leaders as a result of Iraqi-led security operations. But some political and factional tensions that have affected the delivery of services remain. The Government of Iraq, with coalition assistance, has

begun addressing the complex underlying ethnic and religious tensions that contribute to violence by ensuring adherence to the rule of law and by establishing reconstruction operation centres to bring much needed essential services and economic investment.

Coalition and Iraqi Security Forces have maintained those security gains even with the reduction of coalition forces to pre-surge levels. Joint operations, in concert with the Awakening movement, have improved the security situation such that, even as a number of coalition countries depart the theatre, the United States has announced the early withdrawal of the Second Brigade of the 101st Airborne Division from Baghdad, bringing the number of brigade combat teams to below pre-surge levels.

Ongoing security operations have produced encouraging results, with arrests of significant Al-Qaida targets in Diyala, Mosul and Baghdad, as well as leaders of other armed groups in Baghdad, Basra, Maysan and Wasit provinces. The Iraqi people's increasing trust of the Iraqi Security Forces has also led to a number of record-breaking seizures of weapons caches, including several hundred IEDs in the Mada'in area and two tons of explosives in Ninawa. Primarily as a result of successful operations against Al-Qaida facilitation and support networks inside of Iraq, we are also beginning to see a decrease in the number of foreign fighters crossing into Iraq.

Nevertheless, we remain concerned by the flow of foreign fighters and lethal aid into the country. Syria remains the primary gateway for foreign terrorists moving into Iraq, and Damascus has taken insufficient action to combat the terrorist facilitation networks based in Syria. We urge Syria to take additional steps against these networks.

For all this progress, Al-Qaida in Iraq remains a significant threat, as do Iranian surrogate militants and Jaysh al-Mahdi militia forces. All retain the intent and capability of carrying out lethal attacks against the Iraqi people, such as the multiple bombings that occurred this week. Al-Qaida in Iraq's use of person-borne improvised explosive devices and its increasing shift towards female suicide bombers remain a particular challenge.

In countering the continued extremist threat, the increased capability of the Iraqi Security Forces has substantially improved the overall security

environment. More than 601,000 personnel now serve in the Iraqi Security Forces — an increase of over 21,000 personnel since our last report to the Council in August.

There are now 165 Iraqi Army combat battalions conducting operations, an increase of four since our last report. Nearly 70 per cent, or 115 of those Iraqi Army combat battalions, are assessed now to be in the lead for operations. The expansion of the Air Force and the Navy lags behind that of the Army. There is nothing surprising about that fact, given the technical platforms that the Air Force must acquire and learn to sustain. While the Air Force and the Navy possess limited capabilities, comprehensive force development strategies are being implemented.

The Air Force is now flying over 300 sorties a week and playing an increasingly active counter-insurgency role, flying surveillance and reconnaissance missions in support of the Iraqi Security Forces and providing important logistics support with its mobility aircraft. The Iraqi Air Force recently graduated its first initial entry pilots, who are now flying, and there will be many more to follow.

The Navy is conducting three times as many patrols as it did last year, with increasing amounts of boarding and searching of vessels coming into Iraqi territorial waters in the northern Arabian Gulf. The Navy has just taken delivery of the first six of 26 modern patrol craft and is expecting the delivery of four large patrol ships in 2009.

The National Police also continues to increase its effectiveness and is now staffed at over 41,000 personnel. The Police continues to stress better ethio-sectarian balance within the force both through recruiting and assignments.

With regard to the coalition role, in September, on the margins of the General Assembly, President Talabani noted with thanks the role of those countries that have contributed to the coalition and NATO Training Mission-Iraq. Currently, coalition members other than the United States contribute over 6,000 force members to the Multinational Force and some 300 personnel to UNAMI. Since our last briefing, approximately 3,000 coalition personnel departed the theatre and others will return home soon.

At the same time, the continued political and economic support of the coalition and the international

community will remain critical to the success of Iraqi efforts to build a stable and secure country. MNF-I is continuing to progressively transfer responsibility for security to the Iraqi Government. This process of transitioning security responsibilities to the Iraqi security forces is increasingly being led by Iraqi officials. Thirteen out of 18 provinces are now under provincial Iraqi control. Al-Anbar province — once a stronghold of Al-Qaida in Iraq — transitioned on 1 September, Babil province transitioned on 23 October and Wasit province transitioned on 29 October.

A joint coalition-Iraqi effort is anticipated to assess conditions in and facilitate transition of the remaining provinces: Salahaddin, Tamim, Diyala, and Ninawa within the next several months, culminating with the planned transfer of security authority for Baghdad in June 2009.

The improvement in security has helped to foster political reconciliation. Since our last report, the Iraqi Council of Representatives unanimously passed a provincial elections law that will provide for local elections in 14 of Iraq's 18 provinces early next year. The provincial elections are a major step toward political stabilization. Sunni Arabs, who boycotted the 2005 provincial elections, will compete for political power in provinces that once were the heartland of the insurgency. UNAMI also remains deeply engaged in elections preparation. Indeed, UNAMI's work with the Iraqi Government proved critical in achieving this elections law and we congratulate Mr. de Mistura for that.

We commend UNAMI's plans to expand its footprint in Iraq and will dedicate ourselves to providing assistance, as necessary, so that UNAMI can continue to assist the Iraqi Government with other critical issues, such as the relocation and reintegration of Iraqi refugees and the internally displaced. We strongly support the construction of the proposed United Nations compound in Baghdad and commend the Government of Iraq on its initial pledge of \$25 million so that planning for this facility may proceed.

UNAMI is heavily involved in assisting with the resolution of the disputed internal boundaries between the Kurdistan Regional Government and the Government of Iraq. The resolution of this dispute is a key step in creating stability for all of Iraq. We

appreciate UNAMI's efforts and assistance on this very important issue.

Iraq has made significant diplomatic gains, with most of the countries in the region normalizing their diplomatic presence in Baghdad. Since our last report, Syria and the Arab League have joined Iraq's other neighbours in naming ambassadors to Iraq — and many of these ambassadors are now on the ground in Baghdad. Other neighbours, including the United Arab Emirates, Bahrain, Egypt, Jordan and Lebanon, have sent high-level delegations to Baghdad. We encourage others in the region to follow their example.

Finally, I want to highlight that negotiations continue between the United States and the Iraqi Government on transitioning our relationship, with a goal of a strong and strategic relationship with Iraq, which respects both countries' sovereignty and serves both countries' interests.

The report of the Secretary-General, which is before the Security Council today, highlights the sustainable progress that has been achieved by the Iraqi Government, with the assistance of the United Nations and the support of the MNF-I and Iraqi security forces.

The United States supports a free, democratic, pluralistic, federal and unified Iraq, and I call upon all parties to renew their commitment to assist the Iraqi Government in continuing the hard work to overcome the challenges that remain.

The President (*spoke in Spanish*): I now give the floor to the representative of Iraq.

Mr. Al Bayati (Iraq): Allow me at the outset to congratulate you, Mr. President, on your assumption of the presidency of the Security Council this month.

I would also like to present our thanks to your predecessor, the representative of China, for his distinguished efforts during his presidency in the month of October.

I would like to thank His Excellency Mr. Zalmay Khalilzad for the briefing he presented to the Council on behalf of the multinational force in Iraq (MNF-I) and for its efforts to support security and stability in Iraq.

Our thanks also go to His Excellency Mr. Staffan de Mistura, the Special Representative of the Secretary-General in Iraq, as well as to the United Nations Assistance Mission for Iraq (UNAMI) team in

Iraq and New York for their tireless work to assist the Government and people of Iraq.

My delegation took note of the report of the Secretary-General and the work of UNAMI in document S/2008/688 and would like to present the following comments.

On the political and security levels, my Government, according to its constitutional responsibilities to guarantee security and stability for all Iraqi citizens, continues to execute these responsibilities all over Iraq through several security operations in Baghdad and other provinces.

This has led to a tangible security improvement by decreasing the insurgents' offensive abilities to target civilians and the Iraqi security forces (ISF). The last security report mentioned that security in the country during the last two months indicates that there were ten activities conducted by the ISF versus one activity by the insurgents.

Furthermore, there has been an 89 per cent decrease of violent activities during the month of August 2008 in comparison to 2006 and 2007. This clearly reflects the Iraqi security forces' ability to control events on the ground.

My Government recognizes that to maintain the security achievements on the ground, it must continue its plans to train the ISF and to provide them with needed weapons and equipments in the best possible way.

The number of officers in the army has increased from 9,800 to 13,911 and the number of soldiers from 116,135 to 217,176. As for the police force, during the most recent period 4,047 officers and 40,004 policemen have also been trained.

The most recent period has witnessed many significant developments in relation to the transfer of security responsibilities from the MNF-I to the Iraqi security forces. The Iraqi Government took over security responsibilities in Al-Anbar Province in September 2008 following the security improvement achieved in that province, which was one of the most violent provinces in western Iraq.

Such violent activities have decreased by approximately 90 per cent. The Iraqi security forces also took over security responsibilities in Babil and Wasit provinces in October 2008, in accordance with

the timetable agreed upon by the Iraqi Government and MNF-I. In total, the Iraqi Government has now taken over security responsibilities in 13 out of 18 Iraqi provinces. This accelerating security improvement in Baghdad and other provinces has assisted a return to normal life for people in most areas of Iraq.

The number of Iraqi displaced families who have returned to their homes in Baghdad has reached 22,442, including 431 Christian families, in October 2008. This improvement is taking place in conjunction with the Iraqi Government's efforts to consolidate national reconciliation between all components of Iraqi society.

Having said that, the Iraqi Government has transferred 98,223 officers and soldiers from the former army to the military service, and the Government has also integrated 51,135 members of the awakening Forces in the civilian and security institutions to bring them to normal life and to play a positive role in the reconstruction in Iraq.

Owing to the terrorist attacks targeting the Christian community in the Mosul province, the Iraqi Government has sent security forces to protect civilians from those attacks. For that purpose, the Interior Ministry sent two brigades to protect families and churches in the city and sent special investigation teams.

Prime Minister al-Maliki announced that Christians in Iraq are an important component of Iraqi society and stressed his commitment to sending emergency assistance and security forces to ensure the protection and safe return of the Christian families to their homes. Accordingly, more than 300 Christian families have returned to their homes after security and stability were restored in their neighbourhoods.

The adoption of the provincial council election law on 24 September 2008 is one of the most significant legislative developments to have taken place in Iraq during the past two months. According to this law, 427 political entities, representing all Iraqi components, will participate in local elections. Article 50 of the provincial council election law has been amended and adopted in order to guarantee equal representation to all minorities in Iraq.

As regards the social and economic situation, tangible improvement in the political and security situation has had a positive effect on the National

Development Strategy. Iraqi economic indicators have witnessed a clear improvement during the past few months. The rate of economic growth is expected to reach 8 per cent by the end of 2008, according to International Monetary Fund estimates. The inflation rate has decreased from 16 per cent in 2007 to 12 per cent in the most recent quarter, and the unemployment rate has decreased from 22 per cent in 2007 to 17 per cent during the most recent quarter. These economic indicators reflect a comprehensive improvement in the Iraqi economy.

Investment is a priority for the Iraqi Government's national financial and economic policies. The Government has allocated \$19 billion of the national budget for investment activities for all Iraqi ministries and has established a national monitoring mechanism to encourage Iraqi ministries to spend the allocated investment funds on their projects. This has led to an increase in the spending percentage of the ministries' budgets from 24 per cent to 63 per cent.

The Iraqi Government has established a social security network to support various social segments of Iraqi society, including orphans, widows and the unemployed. The Government allocated \$812 million to this project, including \$76 million for displaced families. This network has witnessed a 25 per cent expansion in the number of individuals included and in the funds allocated to it during November 2008.

Within the framework of economic policies aimed at reconstructing the Iraqi industrial sector, the Ministry of Industry recently signed a number of investment contracts with local, Arab and foreign companies to the value of \$1 billion in order to diversify the sources of national income.

The Iraqi Government has adopted new policies to reconstruct and develop the oil industry field. Oil production has increased by 11 per cent, according to the latest reports issued by the Iraqi Oil Ministry, and the Iraqi Government has joined the international Extractive Industries Transparency Initiative to place a monitoring mechanism on oil revenue and on ways of spending it.

In the area of basic services, the Iraqi Government has reduced the number of people deprived of water and sewage systems to 10 per cent in the urban areas and 30 per cent in the rural areas. The production of electricity has risen significantly during

the past three months, and the Iraqi Government increased the funds allocated to building new power stations.

Within the framework of Government efforts to combat financial and administrative corruption, Iraq ratified the United Nations Convention against Corruption in 2008. The Iraqi Government started cooperating with the United Nations Development Programme and the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime to implement the new anti-corruption programme in Iraq, which was adopted by the United Nations in September 2008 to strengthen the Government's anti-corruption activities in the next five years.

The Iraqi Government is keen to promote a new culture of respecting human rights in Iraqi society, based on the concepts of tolerance and mutual acceptance among the various components of Iraqi society. The Government achieved significant progress in establishing a national system to monitor human rights violations through professional teams in the Ministry of Human Rights. This mechanism revealed many cases of human rights violations and, to guarantee a high level of commitment to human rights within the Iraqi security institutions, the Ministry of Interior dismissed 27,690 officers, and another 4,012 are to be put on trial for their involvement in cases of human rights violations.

On the regional and international levels, the Iraqi Government continues its efforts within the framework of the support mechanism, which was adopted at the expanded meetings of Foreign Ministers of neighbouring countries of Iraq, held in Sharm el-Sheikh and Istanbul, to monitor and coordinate the work of the committees on refugees, energy and security. The energy committee held its last meeting on 11 October 2008, and the refugees committee plans to hold its next meeting in Amman on 15 November 2008. The security coordination committee meeting will be held in Damascus on 22 and 23 November 2008. In this regard, I would like to stress my Government's commitment to full cooperation with the neighbouring countries to reach solutions on all issues of mutual interest.

The last few months witnessed several important official visits to Iraq, such as the visit on 8 July of the Turkish Prime Minister, His Excellency Mr. Recep Tayyip Erdoğan, to promote cooperation between Iraq

and Turkey and which established a High-Level Strategic Cooperation Council between the two countries. Other visits were made to Iraq by His Majesty King Abdullah of Jordan, on 11 August; the Lebanese Prime Minister, His Excellency Mr. Fouad Siniora, on 20 August; the Egyptian Foreign Minister, His Excellency Mr. Ahmed Aboul Gheit on 5 October; and His Highness Crown Prince Sheikh Mohammed bin Zayed al-Nahayan of the United Arab Emirates, on 7 October. These visits highlight the significance of continued cooperation with Iraq's regional partners in securing common interests.

Following the Iraqi Government's efforts to encourage Arab States to reopen their embassies in Baghdad, several Arab ambassadors arrived in Baghdad for that purpose, including those of Jordan, Bahrain, Kuwait, Syria and the United Arab Emirates. The League of Arab States appointed a new representative to Baghdad on 6 October. The Organization of the Islamic Conference has also reopened its offices in Iraq.

With regard to the International Compact with Iraq, the Iraqi Government, following the first review conference, which was held in Stockholm, took many steps to enhance national policies to meet all the requirements through the shared monitoring matrix. In this regard, my delegation would like to encourage all Arab countries to help their brothers in Iraq by forgiving Iraq's debts and reducing the percentage of the compensation imposed on Iraq due to the invasion of Kuwait in 1990, a crime committed by the former dictatorial regime. My Government welcomes the agreement of the Kuwaiti Government to address the issue of compensation through bilateral negotiations under the auspices of the United Nations Compensation Commission.

With regard to cooperation between Iraq, the United Nations and our brothers in Kuwait, the Iraqi Government invited Mr. Gennady Tarasov, High-level Coordinator for missing Kuwaitis and Kuwaiti property, to visit Baghdad from 12 to 15 October 2008. The visit was successful, and Mr. Tarasov met with high-level Iraqi official to address this issue.

As a demonstration of my Government's keenness to facilitate UNAMI's execution of its mandate, the Iraqi Government has decided to allocate \$25 million from this year's budget to contribute to the cost of building the UNAMI headquarters in Baghdad.

This reflects our great appreciation of UNAMI's role in Iraq and our readiness to cooperate with the United Nations. I would like also to confirm my Government's readiness to provide the needed protection to the United Nations Assistance Mission for Iraq.

In conclusion, I would like to stress my Government's gratitude for UNAMI's role in Iraq and for Mr. de Mistura's support, which is offered upon the Government's request and based on mutually agreed mechanisms. I would like to reiterate our thanks to the support of the multinational forces in Iraq for the people and the Government of Iraq.

Mr. Ettalhi (Libyan Arab Jamahiriya) (*spoke in Arabic*): Allow me to begin by thanking Mr. Staffan de Mistura for his valuable briefing and to extend our high appreciation for his efforts. We would also like to thank His Excellency Mr. Zalmay Khalilzad, the representative of the United States, for the useful presentation he made on the work of the Multinational Forces. We welcome the presence of our brother, Mr. Hamid Al Bayati, the Permanent Representative of Iraq, and thank him for his briefing as well.

The Libyan Arab Jamahiriya expresses its satisfaction with the continued improvement of the security situation in Iraq. The decrease in the instances of violence in the country has already been highlighted by Mr. de Mistura in his briefing and by the figures cited by Mr. Khalilzad in his presentation. There has been an increase in the Iraqi forces' assumption of security tasks from the Multinational Force. Additional United States forces have withdrawn without affecting the security situation. Internally displaced persons returned to their homes in growing numbers during the three months of June, July and August. All of those facts are, without a doubt, indicators that the security situation is moving in the right direction, as we continue to hope it will.

We also welcome the political developments and progress in other sectors in the fraternal country of Iraq during the period under discussion. The electoral law for the governorates was adopted, as the hurdles that had earlier prevented its adoption were overcome. There have been positive developments in terms of the voter registration update, a date set for elections in 14 governorates, the situation with regard to the "awakening councils" and support for the rule of law and justice in Iraq. In addition, there have been improvements in the level of social services provided,

particularly in the provision of food supplies. As indicated by Mr. Al Bayati, economic indicators have improved. Other positive issues are highlighted in the report of the Secretary-General (S/2008/688).

All these developments provide reason for optimism; we are confident that they have had a positive impact on the direct and indirect bilateral relations of Iraq with its neighbouring countries. We have witnessed the return of foreign ambassadors to Iraq, in addition to high-level visits, continued regional dialogue and attempts to address pending issues between Iraq and some of its neighbours. All those elements are positive indications that the situation in general is moving in the right direction.

However, Iraqis and the international community must still overcome certain challenges. Critical issues now lying dormant must be addressed through a comprehensive approach. For example, the security situation, despite a relative improvement, remains fragile. Events have taken place in Mosul targeting Christians. Some Iraqis are still reluctant to return to their homes. Between 1,000 and 2,500 Iraqis per month refuse to return, and some 20,000 have sought asylum in other countries during the first eight months of this year — the highest number in the world to do so. Internally displaced persons returning to their homes have faced real difficulties in terms of stability, which has led the head of a committee on forcibly displaced people to claim that the Government and the security forces have had a hand to play in the situation. The explosions that have occurred this week in Iraq are disheartening and disquieting. They highlight the vulnerability of the security situation.

We have said many times before in this Council that the situation in Iraq will never become stable without achieving national reconciliation, the three most important aspects of which — all requiring immediate and urgent progress — involve first, an end to foreign occupation. The people of Iraq have always rejected and resisted occupation. Continued occupation in any form will be a divisive factor, thereby contributing to instability and possibly causing a setback in the security situation.

Secondly, an agreement on the constitutional review process must be reached. The current Iraqi Constitution, in the words of Mr. al-Maliki, the Iraqi Prime Minister, might have been drawn up in an atmosphere of fear. Unfortunately, we have entrenched

those fears and compromised our aspirations. To quote paragraph 17 of the report of the Secretary-General:

"In mid-July, the Constitutional Review Committee of the Iraqi Parliament submitted its second report to the Presidency of Iraq. The report outlined a number of key issues within the constitutional review process on which the Committee has, thus far, been unable to reach a political consensus."

We hope that all parties concerned will work on promoting dialogue in the spirit of the sincere national desire that we have always known to be prevalent among Iraqis, so that they can draft a constitution that reflects the national and legitimate realities and aspirations of Iraq, thus establishing Iraq as a democratic Arab country that guarantees the rights of all its social groups and minorities.

Thirdly, there are issues that, in our view, are considered hallmarks of any national reconciliation process. In the case of Iraq, these include the demarcation of the internal boundaries among the governorates. Such efforts should be buttressed by a true and continuous effort in the field of development, covering all the Iraqi regions and resulting in a positive impact on the Iraqi people.

Paragraphs 40 to 45 of the report of the Secretary-General address the question of human rights. The report points to some improvements in the field of human rights as a result of the overall improvement in the security environment. However, the report also stresses that serious and systematic human rights violations persist. By way of example, the report cites the assassination of journalists and political activists and the arbitrary attempts to impact the demographic composition of some Iraqi governorates. These include, of course, the recent events targeting Christians in Iraq. The report points out that the number of detainees has decreased from 24,000 in 2007 to 18,000 currently. While we welcome and encourage that trend, we hope that the Multinational Force would positively respond to the efforts of the United Nations Assistance Mission for Iraq (UNAMI) in respecting the provisions of international humanitarian law.

It is also regrettable that the report confirms that many of those released by the Multinational Force have been rearrested by the Government of Iraq. According to the report of the Secretary-General, there are

currently more than 27,000 detainees in Iraqi Government prisons. We also share the concerns expressed by the Secretary-General in paragraphs 43 and 44 of his report.

It is also disquieting that the Multinational Force in Iraq crossed the Syrian border for the first time since 2003. On 26 October, those forces attacked the village of Sukkariyah, within Syria's borders, resulting in many civilian casualties. Not only is that a violation of the Charter of the United Nations, but it will no doubt raise tensions in a region that should be spared any further causes of tension. We do not believe that such an act can in any way contribute to Iraq's stability.

In conclusion, my country highly appreciates the efforts of the United Nations Assistance Mission for Iraq and its positive contributions to the political situation, to national and regional dialogue and to supporting constitutional processes and human rights. We also welcome the signing of a strategy between the United Nations and Iraq's Government concerning the assistance to be provided by the Organization to that country.

Mr. Ripert (France) (*spoke in French*): I have the honour to speak also on behalf of the European Union (EU).

First, I would like to thank Special Representative of the Secretary-General Staffan de Mistura for his briefing and, above all, the efforts he is making on the ground with his team. He is putting all his determination, tenacity and courage into these efforts, for which we are grateful. I also wish to thank the Permanent Representative of the United States for his briefing, as well as our colleague the Permanent Representative of Iraq for his statement.

The European Union would like to see a secure, stable, democratic, prosperous and unified Iraq in which human rights are respected. The EU is committed to Iraq's independence, sovereignty, unity and territorial integrity.

The European Union welcomes both the progress achieved in improving the security situation and the steps taken towards national reconciliation with the adoption of the law on provincial elections, the holding of which is essential to strengthening democracy and the rule of law. The European Union takes note of the adoption of an amendment to that law that stipulates the conditions for the representation of persons

belonging to minorities. We hope that the elections will be held as planned in early 2009. As the Secretary-General has indicated in his reports, the priority challenge to be met is that of the national reconciliation and constitutional review process. All of us in the international community have an important role to play in helping the Iraqi people.

The European Union approves of the central role taken by the United Nations Assistance Mission for Iraq (UNAMI) and welcomes the progress achieved in implementing resolutions 1770 (2007) and 1830 (2008). The European Union encourages further close cooperation between UNAMI and the Iraqi authorities. In that regard, the European Union would like UNAMI to continue advising and supporting the Iraqi Government on its political reforms, which, as I have just mentioned, represent the major challenge.

The European Union remains concerned about the human rights situation, in particular that of women, children and persons belonging to ethnic and religious minorities. The EU welcomes the commitment made by the Iraqi Government to take action in that area. The EU also supports the work of the United Nations Assistance Mission for Iraq and reiterates the need to provide special protection to all vulnerable groups.

The European Union commends the work of the United Nations with regard to the humanitarian situation in Iraq. The European Union is concerned about the situation of displaced Iraqis inside Iraq and Iraqi refugees in neighbouring countries, in particular in Jordan and Syria. Those countries deserve our gratitude for the hospitality and solidarity they are providing. We reiterate that the Government of Iraq and the international community have an obligation to protect and assist displaced Iraqis inside Iraq and in neighbouring countries by addressing their immediate and foreseeable needs and ensuring their safety. We encourage the Iraqi Government to use its resources to help neighbouring countries to cope with the additional burden of refugees.

Lastly, notwithstanding the decisions to be taken with regard to the mandate of the Multinational Force, the European Union underscores the importance it attaches to maintaining an adequate level of security that, as called for by the Secretary-General, enables the effective functioning of the United Nations in Iraq.

The European Union thus notes with satisfaction that a number of neighbours and partners in the region

have honoured the commitments undertaken in the final communiqué of the Ministerial Conference of the Neighbouring Countries of Iraq, which was held in April 2008 in Kuwait, and have increased their representation in Baghdad. Constructive engagement by Iraq's neighbours and partners in the region remains essential for peace and stability. The EU encourages all of Iraq's neighbours and partners to do the same. The European Union continues to support the process that Iraq's neighbours have initiated and is ready to participate in the forthcoming expanded ministerial conference.

The European Union would like to actively participate in efforts to further stabilize Iraq. In particular, I would like to emphasize the importance of our renewed commitment as regards the rule of law through community assistance efforts by the European Security and Defence Policy Rule of Law Mission and the bilateral programmes of member States. In that regard, at the General Affairs Council meeting held on 10 November 2008, European Union member States agreed to extend the mandate of the European Union Integrated Rule of Law Mission for Iraq, with effect from June 2009. That will enable the Mission to conduct progressive and experimental pilot activities, where security conditions permit, in the area of the rule of law on Iraqi territory.

The European Union also welcomes the major progress made in the negotiations on a cooperation and trade agreement and expresses its determination to conclude those negotiations as quickly as possible. Such an outcome will help to establish the first contractual relations between the European Union and Iraq and allow us enter into a structured and regular political dialogue that is both technical and political.

Finally, the European Union remains committed to develop its partnership with Iraq in compliance with the principles of the International Compact with Iraq. The EU welcomes the meeting held last May in Stockholm for the first International Compact with Iraq Annual Review Conference. The EU encourages the progress made in its implementation and invites all parties to honour the commitments made on that occasion.

Sir John Sawers (United Kingdom): May I begin by joining colleagues in thanking Special Representative de Mistura for his briefing on the Secretary-General's latest report (S/2008/688). I would

ask him through you, Mr. President, if he could pass on our thanks to the United Nations team working in Iraq. They continue to do excellent work and have played a really key role in the progress we have seen, and which was so fully reported in Mr. de Mistura's briefing. I am also grateful to Ambassador Khalilzad for his presentation on behalf of the Multinational Force in Iraq (MNF-I), to which the United Kingdom continues to contribute over 4,000 troops.

While Iraq still needs to overcome some serious challenges, it is with pleasure that we note the continued progress over the past quarter. We have heard about it in some detail from previous speakers, but it is worth recalling some of the key steps forward.

In terms of security, this period has seen a further decrease in reported incidents of violence to a level as low as it was five years ago. The Iraq security forces have demonstrated increasing capability, as reflected in the fact that Iraq now has lead responsibility for security in 13 out of the 18 provinces. Further process in national reconciliation is required in order to ensure that those gains are sustained, and in that respect the Iraqi Government's assumption of responsibility for support to the Awakening movement is an important step.

The United Kingdom shares concerns about the intimidation and violence towards Iraq's minority communities, for example the Christian community in Mosul. We welcome the swift action taken by the Government of Iraq and are encouraged by the reports from the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees this week that, as a result of that action, many families are now returning to the area.

On the political front, the passage of the provincial election law in September was a significant step forward, as Mr. de Mistura said. The holding of the elections will mark another milestone in democratic progress in Iraq and should also contribute to the causes of reconciliation and good governance by giving those who boycotted previous elections the chance to be represented in local administrations. While the details of the quota for guaranteed seats for minorities have proved to be contentious, it is welcome that Iraq's political leaders have acknowledged the principle that minority rights should be protected in that way. We value and commend the work undertaken by United Nations Assistance Mission for Iraq

(UNAMI) in terms of both electoral assistance and in facilitating final agreement on the election law.

The United Kingdom has consistently urged increased regional and international engagement with Iraq and we warmly welcome the recent arrival of ambassadors from five regional countries. We also welcome the important support provided by UNAMI to the Iraq Neighbours Group process. As a participant in that process, the United Kingdom hopes that it can deliver concrete improvements in cooperation between Iraq and its neighbours on security, energy and humanitarian issues. Increased trade and investment between Iraq and its neighbours can also make an important contribution to stability and prosperity in the region, and that should be one focus for further engagement.

We take this opportunity to reiterate that external support for illegal armed groups outside the political process in Iraq is unacceptable. We continue to encourage all those who have influence on the parties who provide such support to press for it to come to an end.

As the European Union presidency has indicated, the European Union attaches importance to a constructive and forward-looking relationship with Iraq. The recent decision to extend the European Union Rule of Law Mission for Iraq, which offers training and capacity-building in the criminal justice system, shows the European Union's continued commitment to support the rule of law in Iraq.

I would like to close by outlining my own Government's support for the Government of Iraq. As set out by the British Prime Minister on 22 July this year, our armed forces in southern Iraq remain focused on two remaining key commitments: to train and mentor the Fourteenth Division of the Iraqi Army and to prepare Basra International Airport for transfer to Iraqi control. We remain on course to fulfil those tasks in the coming months, following which our military mission will change fundamentally to a normal bilateral defence relationship of the kind we have with other friends and partners in the region. We are in discussion with the Government of Iraq over a bilateral agreement that will provide the legal basis for both the fulfilment of those outstanding commitments and for the longer-term defence relationship. We look forward to its successful conclusion before the end of this year.

The transition in our presence will mark a new chapter in our relationship with and our support for Iraq. We look forward to having a close and substantive bilateral relationship, while continuing to offer political and practical support to Iraqi-led efforts to build State capacity, improve security and the rule of law, and deliver economic opportunity for the Iraqi people.

As conditions in Iraq improve, a close and productive relationship between it and international organizations becomes increasingly important to allow Iraq to achieve its full potential. The United Nations has led the way in that area and we remain strongly supportive of the role that UNAMI is playing on a range of issues in Iraq. We welcome the Government of Iraq's decision to provide the United Nations with financial support to build a permanent mission in Iraq, and we believe that this reflects the United Nations key role in the future development of a stable, secure and prosperous Iraq.

Mr. Terzi di Sant'Agata (Italy): I, too, would like to thank the Special Representative of the Secretary-General, Staffan de Mistura, for his very informative briefing today. I would also like to commend his efforts towards the significant results that United Nations Assistance Mission for Iraq (UNAMI) is achieving in supporting the Government of Iraq, as he described. I would ask him to please also pass on our congratulations and best wishes for the continuation of their important work in Iraq to all UNAMI staff. UNAMI, as underlined by the Special Representative, has an essential role in addressing a number of very complex and significant questions. Therefore, ensuring the safety of the United Nations presence in Iraq remains a high priority for the United Nations and the Security Council.

I would like to thank Ambassador Khalilzad for his briefing on behalf of the Multinational Force in Iraq (MNF-I) and Ambassador Al Bayati for his statement. Let me also associate myself with the statement delivered by Ambassador Ripert on behalf of the European Union.

We share the Secretary-General's assessment of the situation in Iraq in his latest report (S/2008/688). The Government of Iraq has made substantial progress in the security situation. The increasing autonomy of the Iraqi Security Forces is also a positive development. In that regard, I would like to note that

Italy remains committed to helping Iraq build its security capacities through the NATO Training Mission. At the same time, I agree with the Secretary-General that this progress will remain fragile unless it is backed up by a national reconciliation process. All the Iraqi political forces should be encouraged to continue the political dialogue in order to solve outstanding issues and reach agreed solutions on such fundamental questions as the structure of the Iraqi institutions and the sharing of power and resources. The ongoing constitutional review is of the utmost importance.

The Iraqi political situation seems to be moving in the right direction. I refer in particular to the adoption of a new provincial electoral law, a major step forward that shows once again the commitment of the Iraqi political forces to democracy and dialogue. We look forward to the holding of provincial elections, another step in building a democratic Iraq that will empower representative local leaders and give a chance to all Iraqi political forces to remain engaged. The elections must take place in a fair and transparent manner, free of interference or intimidation from armed groups.

I would like to welcome in particular the adoption of a law that provides for reserved seats for Iraqi minorities. The representation of minorities is a key element, especially in a country as diverse and rich in cultures and communities as Iraq. The affirmation of such a principle is of great importance.

Another top priority is the issue of refugees and internally displaced persons (IDPs). Their safe and voluntary return home must be a priority. The international community should support the Iraqi Government's actions as well as that of the host countries in that endeavour. There are encouraging signs, with some refugees and IDPs starting to return voluntarily. That progress must be consolidated.

A few days ago, my Government organized a conference on the issue of militias, attended by representatives of all the major Iraqi political forces. The message from that meeting was clear: There is no place for militias and armed groups in a democratic society. The disbandment of those armed groups that still exist in Iraq outside State control and the integration of their members into Iraq's legitimate security forces and civilian life are therefore essential to the stabilization of the country.

The development of a viable private sector is not only an economic priority but also a political one. It would diversify the economy and provide the alternative revenue sources needed to break the State budget's dependency on fluctuations in the oil market. The approval of a hydrocarbons law is thus a clear priority. A vital private sector is a central element of a democratic system and, in that regard, Italy is committed to cooperating with Iraq within the framework of the International Compact with Iraq and of the bilateral friendship and cooperation agreement signed in 2007.

My country has been at the side of the Iraqi people and institutions in their efforts to build a democratic State that is at peace with itself and with its neighbours. I should like to conclude by affirming that commitment.

Mr. Churkin (Russian Federation) (*spoke in Russian*): First of all, I would like to thank the head of the United Nations Assistance Mission for Iraq (UNAMI), Mr. de Mistura, for presenting the report of the Secretary-General on the situation in Iraq and the work of the United Nations there (S/2008/688), and also for his leadership of the United Nations Mission in the very complex conditions of today's Iraq.

We also note the statement by the Permanent Representative of Iraq, Mr. Al Bayati, who talked about the work of his Government to stabilize the situation in the country, the progress achieved and the remaining problems. We are also grateful to the Permanent Representative of the United States of America, Mr. Khalilzad, for his briefing on the activities of the Multinational Force.

Overall, we think that the report of the Secretary-General objectively reflects the general political, security and socio-economic situation in Iraq, and we agree with most of its conclusions. We note with satisfaction the drop in violent incidents undermining stability in the country and the consolidation and improved performance and effectiveness of the Iraqi Security Forces, as shown by the United States military command's transfer of control of Babil and Wasit Provinces and their capitals, Hilla and Kut, to Iraqi forces in October.

The fact that only 5 out of 18 governorates are under the control of the coalition forces reflects the positive dynamic in the country's security situation. What has been achieved is, to a large extent, the result

of the measures taken by the Government of Iraq, led by the Prime Minister, Nuri al-Maliki. Nevertheless, it is a little early to toast victory, because there are still sources of tension that continue to have an impact on strengthening stability in the country.

In that regard, we would like to express our concern with respect to the flare-ups of violence that have occurred recently in Mosul, Baghdad, Baqubah and other Iraqi towns, causing the deaths of dozens of peaceful civilians. That seems to confirm the view of the Secretary-General on the fragility of the situation in the country. We strongly condemn those acts of violence. We emphasize that it is impossible to achieve the long-term stabilization of Iraq by force alone. Steps are needed to strengthen inter-Iraqi dialogue among all forces that reject terrorism as a way to solve political problems.

In that context, the amendments to the provincial election law adopted on 3 November are of particular importance. They guarantee national and religious minorities a mandatory quota of representation in local councils, as well as an increase in the number of women in Government structures.

We note the active role of UNAMI in achieving a consensus among the different political forces in Iraq on that important issue. We believe that elections to the local councils will be an important step towards retaining the unity and territorial integrity of the country and achieving national harmony and reconciliation among all Iraqis.

Together with the Secretary-General, we call on the Iraqi forces to take decisive steps to enhance the system of human rights protection in the country so as to guarantee respect for the rights of all Iraqis. We welcome Baghdad's ratification of the Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment. We welcome the efforts of UNAMI to solve the problem of refugees and internally displaced persons. Unfortunately, that situation in that respect remains difficult, and we would like to thank the Governments of Syria and Jordan for having welcomed many tens of thousands of Iraqi citizens on their territories.

We welcome the efforts of UNAMI to encourage the development of relations between Iraq and its neighbouring countries, which has led to the opening of several embassies in Baghdad and, in a broader context, encouraged contact between the leaders of Iraq

and their counterparts in the countries of the Near and Middle East.

Against that background, we consider that the recent operation undertaken by United States forces in Iraq, which violated the borders of Syria and conducted a raid on the outskirts of Abu Kamal, considerably undermined efforts to achieve stabilization in Iraq and the Middle East as a whole.

Iraq faces the serious challenges of nation-building and national reconciliation. In the near future, it will have to decide on the future nature and status of the presence of international forces on its territory. In that regard, the Russian Federation is sympathetic to the legitimate demands of Iraq for guaranteed sovereignty over its territory.

We support the efforts of the international community to provide economic assistance to Baghdad in the context of the International Compact with Iraq. It is well known that Russia is providing bilateral assistance to Iraq in rebuilding its economy. I would like particularly to emphasize that Russian experts are currently present on the ground in Iraq, despite the very complicated conditions and risks in the country, and are working on building and rebuilding Iraqi energy facilities.

At the same time, we are convinced that any plans of the international community to promote Iraq's economic recovery will face serious difficulties unless they are bolstered by additional political steps aimed at ensuring sustainable normalization of the situation in the country.

Mr. Grauls (Belgium) (*spoke in French*): At the outset, I would like to thank Special Representative de Mistura for his presentation, which was very clear, comprehensive and, I would add, very convincing. I would also like to thank Ambassador Khalilzad for his briefing on the Multinational Force. In addition, I welcome the participation of Ambassador Al Bayati in our debate and would like to associate my delegation with the statement made by Ambassador Ripert of France on behalf of the European Union.

The past two years have been marked by considerable progress in the situation in Iraq. There has been progress in the security, political and humanitarian situations, from which the population is beginning to benefit and which, in particular, has led to a welcome normalization of the relations of Iraq with

its neighbours. That progress has required the support of the international community and regional actors, but it has been brought about above all by the Iraqis themselves and their elected Government, led by Prime Minister al-Maliki.

However, that progress should not blind us to the problems that remain or lead us to forget our responsibility towards the outstanding challenges. In that regard, I would like to mention three points.

First, with regard to the security situation, Belgium welcomes the improvement in security and the increasing role played by the Iraqi Security Forces in ensuring public order. First and foremost, that is reflected in the direct control that they now exercise over security in 13 of the country's 18 provinces, as well as by their resolute action against militia activity and the move to integrate the Sons of Iraq into the Iraqi security forces — two changes that should strengthen the prerogative of the rule of law to exercise the monopoly of the security forces over the use of force.

However, the bloody attacks of recent days in Mosul, Baghdad and elsewhere remind us that, for Iraqis, daily security is still often very relative and remains an obstacle to the return of thousands of people who have been forced to flee their homes. Moreover, there is a real fear that the upcoming provincial elections could be an additional motive for violent attacks by criminal gangs who are still rampant.

We encourage the Iraqi authorities to continue their efforts and to complement their achievements with robust action in protecting fundamental human rights, including in detention. Just as important as re-establishing order is guaranteeing the rights of each citizen, which will earn the authorities the essential confidence and support of the population.

Secondly, with regard to political reconciliation, Belgium welcomes the political agreement that made possible the adoption of the law on the upcoming provincial elections. Following the constitutional referendum and the 2005 elections, those elections will represent a new step in the consolidation of a democracy open to all Iraqis. In that spirit, we welcome in particular the inclusion of provisions for the representation of women and minorities. Of greater concern is the discussion on the distribution of power and the sharing of assets, which have been slow in coming about. An agreement on those issues is, however, an essential foundation for the stable

coexistence of all of the different Iraqi communities and for a prosperity that is as genuine as it is equitably distributed. We thus call upon all parties to show the will necessary to achieve a compromise.

In that context and given the tension and increased violence in the areas of the disputed internal boundaries, we welcome the technical assistance provided by UNAMI that was mentioned by the Special Representative of the Secretary-General in his briefing. We encourage all sides to make use of that assistance.

Thirdly, on the issue of human rights, Belgium encourages the Iraqi authorities to increase their efforts to take advantage of the improved security situation to combat the serious violations of human rights that continue to affect the most vulnerable populations. In response to the events of the past summer, we reiterate our unequivocal condemnation of the campaign of violence against the Christian community of Mosul, while we also note with satisfaction measures taken by Prime Minister al-Maliki.

In the few weeks remaining until the end of the mandate of the multinational force in Iraq, Belgium reminds the Council that it is the Council's task to ensure that the mandate of the United Nations be carried out under secure conditions. We also welcome the decision by the Government of Iraq to facilitate the construction of a new United Nations headquarters in Baghdad by providing land, and the announcement of a substantial financial contribution.

Finally, Belgium must reaffirm its appreciation for the excellent work — courageous and professional and carried out under difficult circumstances — by the United Nations Assistance Mission for Iraq and by Mr. de Mistura personally. Mr. de Mistura will continue to benefit from the full and unequivocal support of Belgium in completing his mandate.

Mr. Natalegawa (Indonesia): I would like to begin by joining previous speakers in thanking the Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Iraq, Mr. Staffan de Mistura, for his comprehensive briefing and the Secretary-General for his report (S/2008/688). My delegation also thanks the representative of the United States for his statement on behalf of the multinational force in Iraq. We also greatly appreciate the information provided by the Permanent Representative of Iraq.

We are encouraged by the overall improvement in the security situation in Iraq. We believe that this accomplishment will provide Iraq with the opportunity to make further progress in its political processes and economic development. It is critical that the encouraging achievement be maintained and strengthened. In that regard, my delegation welcomes the continued efforts by the Government of Iraq to build the capacity of the Iraqi security forces. The recent transfer of security responsibilities from the multinational force to the Iraqi army in some governorates is a sign of the increased capacity of the Iraqi security forces.

My delegation also recognizes that, despite the improvement, Iraq continues to face serious security challenges. We believe that addressing the persistence of security threats will require not only military measures but also the promotion of dialogue and national reconciliation across political, ethnic and sectarian lines. Peace and stability in Iraq could also be underpinned by tangible progress in socio-economic reconstruction, strong steps to bolster the human rights protection system to guarantee the rights of Iraqi citizens and the promotion of good governance and the rule of law.

Electoral democracy is an important part of political stability in Iraq. My delegation, in that regard, is particularly encouraged by the adoption of the provincial election law in September 2008, which will serve as the legal basis for the conduct of the forthcoming provincial elections in early 2009. We are hopeful that those elections will advance political dialogue, establish representative provincial councils and empower community leaders to meet the needs of local citizens in cooperation with the Government of Iraq.

In ensuring political stability and economic progress, Iraq will continue to require the support of countries in the region. In that regard, we welcome the increasing cooperation between Iraq and other countries as well as institutions in the region. We are of the view that the sustained work of the working groups on Iraqi border security, refugees and energy could further enhance such cooperation.

We continue to attach primary importance to the International Compact with Iraq, serving as a new partnership between Iraq and the international community in order to achieve peace, consolidation

and comprehensive development. We recognize the importance of the increased presence of international agencies in Baghdad and at the provincial level, in order to support various initiatives within the framework of the Compact. We therefore commend the United Nations agencies, such as the World Food Programme, the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, the United Nations Development Programme and the World Health Organization for establishing a permanent presence in Iraq.

The humanitarian situation of the Iraqi refugees and internally displaced persons (IDPs) remains a matter of concern to my delegation. International support aimed at meeting their urgent needs remains critical. The United Nations Assistance Strategy for Iraq signed in August 2008 by the United Nations and the Government of Iraq should provide a framework not only for enhancing economic development but also for mitigating the difficulties that Iraqi refugees and IDPs continue to face. We welcome the fact that increasing numbers of refugees and IDPs are returning to Iraq and the measures taken by the Government of Iraq to facilitate their return.

We remain concerned over the continued incidence of civilian casualties in Iraq. In that regard, my Government underlines the importance of respect for international humanitarian and human rights law and for appropriate measures to ensure the protection of civilians.

Indonesia continues to attach primary importance to UNAMI's role and contribution to the efforts of the Government of Iraq in reconstruction and development, conducting elections and promoting human rights, good governance and the rule of law. We commend UNAMI for its continued support for the enhancement of relations between Iraq and the countries of the region with a view to promoting an agenda of mutual collaboration and partnership.

Finally, in light of the fifth anniversary of the heinous terrorist attack on the United Nations office in Baghdad in 2003, my delegation would like to pay tribute to the staff members and others who became the victims of the heinous attack. Their dedication and sacrifices will always be remembered.

Mr. Jurica (Croatia): May I begin by extending our welcome to the Special Representative of the Secretary-General, Mr. de Mistura, and expressing our

appreciation for the ongoing efforts and commitment that he and his team are devoting to fulfilling the mandate of the United Nations Assistance Mission for Iraq (UNAMI). Allow me also to take the opportunity to thank Ambassador Khalilzad of the United States for his presentation on behalf of the multinational force and Ambassador Al Bayati of Iraq for his presentation today.

While Croatia aligns itself with the statement delivered by France on behalf of the European Union, allow me to make a few additional observations. The gains achieved on the political and the security fronts this year, with the assistance of UNAMI and the support of the multinational force, underpin a remarkable process of transformation of Iraq towards a democratic, stable, secure and prosperous country. The democratically elected Government of Iraq is extending its authority and security presence in a growing number of provinces. The socio-economic situation is improving, while microeconomic indicators point to an expanding economy.

The recent adoption of the provincial election law has opened the way for provincial elections to take place in early 2009. That would be an excellent opportunity to further consider the progress achieved. It is important that the elections be well-prepared as well as fair and inclusive. We salute the important contributions that UNAMI has been making in that regard, including its facilitation role on the issue of minority representation in the provincial councils.

A secure environment is critical to the holding of successful elections. The recent incidents of violence, including an intimidation campaign against Christians in Mosul, are unsettling. We deplore all attempts to reignite the conflict, and we express our condolences to the families of those who lost their lives in the recent attacks.

However, that should not be allowed to overshadow the overall security gains witnessed over the past year. We are encouraged to observe a continuing period of improved stability, and we welcome it. We are also pleased to hear that the responsibility for security has been handed over to the Government of Iraq in more than two thirds of its provinces. The Iraqi Government has demonstrated its increasing capabilities, including the ability to address security challenges. We welcome the beginning of the integration of ex-combatants into Government

functions and recognize that that is a long-term effort that is essential in order to create impartial and non-sectarian security forces that enjoy the trust and respect of all Iraqi communities.

We have taken note of the belated discussions under way between Iraq and the United States, and we hope that they will lead to the rapid conclusion of a status-of-forces agreement before the end of this year, leaving no security gaps.

Security is also a precondition for the reconstruction and development of the country. Last May in Stockholm, the international community reaffirmed its commitment to continuing to work in partnership with the Iraqi Government within the framework of the Iraqi Compact. We welcome the signing of the United Nations Assistance Strategy for Iraq, notably its focus on mobilizing Iraq's resources and on capacity-building.

Iraq has vast economic potential, which will be translated into improvements in infrastructure and in essential services for all Iraqi citizens. To echo the Secretary-General's remarks, the mobilization of Iraq's abundant economic and human resources can provide further impetus to the national reconciliation effort.

Dialogue with and the constructive engagement of Iraq's neighbours are other critical components in the long-term stabilization and reconstruction of Iraq. We salute and encourage the growing regional diplomatic engagement, including through the reopening of embassies of regional countries in Baghdad.

National reconciliation remains a priority in Iraq. In order to overcome sectarian violence, cross-community cooperation efforts should be encouraged at all levels. Iraqi leaders have demonstrated the ability to work together and move beyond sectarianism. A number of important legislative milestones have been reached this year. We hope to see similar progress on the issue of hydrocarbon resources, the implementation of article 140 of the Constitution and the constitutional revision process.

We encourage the extension of UNAMI's presence in Iraq. UNAMI has proved to be a positive force in advancing national reconciliation, facilitating political consensus, engaging with the issues of minority representation and disputed internal boundaries, promoting regional dialogue, offering

substantial electoral assistance, promoting human rights and supporting reconstruction and development. It has our full and continuing support.

Mr. Le Luong Minh (Viet Nam): On behalf of my delegation, I would like to thank Mr. de Mistura, head of the United Nations Assistance Mission for Iraq (UNAMI), for his detailed briefing. I also thank Ambassador Khalilzad of the United States for his report on behalf of the Multinational Force in Iraq. We welcome the participation of the delegation of Iraq in this debate and thank Ambassador Al Bayati for his statement.

We are approaching the end of 2008 amid intertwining achievements and challenges with regard to the situation in Iraq. My delegation notes with encouragement Iraq's continued and measured progress across a vast spectrum, including a further decrease in security incidents and violence, the long-awaited adoption of the provincial council elections law, the general observance of Moqtada al-Sadr's ceasefire, the formal transfer of security responsibilities to the Iraqi army in 13 governorates and the accelerated return of internally displaced persons and refugees. We are also heartened to see the incremental macroeconomic improvements in domestic consumption, public expenditure, budget execution, private sector reform, foreign and local investment and external debt settlement.

The aforementioned progress, however, has not eclipsed the magnitude of the challenges that remain pertinent. While the Iraqi economy continues to grow, thanks in large part to oil revenues, there are still pressing demands to devote more resources and capacity to generating employment, ensuring food security and better access to public services, promoting social welfare and environmental protection, advancing the legislative agenda and constitutional review, curbing the illicit use of weapons and combating organized crime, promoting disarmament and demobilizing and reintegrating ex-combatants. The latest series of incidents involving sectarian violence and suicide bombings in Baghdad, Kirkuk and a number of other provinces reminds us that security gains are still fragile. As reported by the Secretary-General, the deteriorated living conditions of vulnerable groups, most of whom are women, children, refugees or internally displaced persons, deserve the continued attention and cooperation of all relevant stakeholders in order to serve the legitimate interests of

Iraqi civilians in compliance with international human rights and humanitarian law.

As in any other country emerging from a devastating war, the quest for durable peace and sustainable development in Iraq should be a nationally owned process relying on a harmonious combination of various political, security and socioeconomic parameters and requiring the united efforts of all segments of the population. My delegation calls on all parties in Iraq to accord the highest priority to national interests, to renounce all potentially destabilizing acts and to jointly shoulder the national agenda of reconciliation and dialogue, political stabilization and socioeconomic reform, thus creating the most conducive environment possible for the provincial elections scheduled for January 2009, as well as for the country's long-term peace, stability and prosperity.

In order to help Iraq to maximize its internal strengths and to fully integrate into the world community, United Nations agencies, neighbouring countries and the international community can and should play a more incisive role. In that connection, while we welcome the signing of the United Nations Assistance Strategy for Iraq 2008-2010, my delegation supports every United Nations effort to truly become a promoter of development, a coordinator of international contributions and a catalyst for improvements in the living conditions of the Iraqi people. We commend the efforts undertaken by the United Nations Assistance Mission for Iraq (UNAMI) since the renewal of its mandate, notably in helping the people of Iraq to advance political dialogue and confidence-building, to resolve the status of Kirkuk and other contested internal boundaries, to extend electoral assistance, to support the constitutional review process and to facilitate the regional dialogue process.

In concluding, my delegation notes with appreciation the continued engagement of regional countries and the international community in leveraging Iraq's reconstruction, development and reintegration, especially through the normalization of external bilateral relations and within broader frameworks such as the International Compact with Iraq, the expanded ministerial meetings and the regional working groups on energy, refugees and security. We hope that all parties concerned will take further concrete steps to consolidate and contribute to that mutually beneficial partnership on the basis of

respect for the political independence, sovereignty and territorial integrity of Iraq.

Mr. Kafando (Burkina Faso) (spoke in French): My delegation greatly appreciates the briefing given by Mr. Staffan de Mistura, for which we thank him. We also thank Ambassador Khalilzad for his briefing on the activities of the Multinational Force. We also thank our colleague the Permanent Representative of Iraq for the very useful information that we have received.

From all of these briefings, we can conclude that the overall situation in Iraq continues to improve, even though it is still fragile; a certain degree of hope is therefore warranted. We welcome in particular the progress made in the political area, with the adoption by the Council of Representatives of the provincial election law as well as the updating of the electoral rolls by the Independent High Electoral Commission. These actions are important steps to strengthening the political dialogue.

Even though significant efforts remain to be made in the area of human rights, including with respect to the protection of women and children, we should welcome certain interesting decisions, among them the ratification by the Iraqi Government of the Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment. We encourage the Iraqi Government to maintain this momentum by adopting the bill on the establishment of an independent human rights commission, a crucial tool for a rational and equitable treatment of human rights-related issues.

Another significant and reassuring aspect that is worth noting is the intensity of diplomatic activity that we have seen in Iraq, including with the restoration of the diplomatic representation of several countries; this offers real prospects for intraregional cooperation.

We have a highly positive view of the important contribution made by the United Nations to Iraq's national reconstruction effort. In particular, the personal commitment of the Special Representative and the prominent role played by the United Nations Assistance Mission for Iraq (UNAMI) have been decisive for the improvement of the political and institutional process; here, we must not overlook their contribution to the organization of free, democratic and transparent elections.

The monitoring and elimination of systematic human rights violations is also at the heart of the Mission's concerns, even though in this area the role of the Iraqi Government and of the Multinational Force is crucial. We hope that the project to support the rule of law and justice in Iraq, supported by the Iraqi Government and the United Nations in partnership with the European Commission, the implementation of which will extend until 2010, will help to further lay the basis for a true democracy in Iraq.

As for economic concerns, we are pleased with the signing by the Iraqi Government and the United Nations of the United Nations Assistance Strategy for Iraq for the period 2008-2010. Along with the national strategy, the International Compact with Iraq and the Development Group Iraq Trust Fund, the Assistance Strategy will make it possible to better coordinate assistance and development initiatives and to build national capacity in the area of governance.

With respect to the violence that we have seen in the past, in particular against certain Christian communities, and above all, looking ahead to the upcoming provincial elections that are planned for the beginning of 2009, we believe that the presence of the Multinational Force and the strengthening of the UNAMI's operational, logistic and security capacities are still necessary.

In conclusion, we would say that more than ever the solidarity of the international community must be affirmed in order to support Iraq in its national reconstruction efforts in an environment of peace with its neighbours and in a stable and secure region.

Mr. La Yifan (China) (*spoke in Chinese*): Mr. President, the Chinese delegation thanks you for organizing this debate. We also thank the Special Representative of the Secretary-General, Mr. Staffan de Mistura, for his briefing. We welcome the briefing delivered by the Permanent Representative of the United States of America, Ambassador Khalilzad, on behalf of the Multinational Force in Iraq. We also welcome the presence of the Iraqi Ambassador, Mr. Hamid Al Bayati, at today's debate, and we thank him for his briefing.

The process of peace and recovery in Iraq is now at a critical juncture. We welcome the continuous progress achieved by Iraq in the political, security and reconstruction fields. Objectively, however, the overall security situation in Iraq remains fragile. We are

especially concerned about the large number of civilian casualties caused by military operations and violent attacks. We call once again on the parties concerned to do everything possible to avoid civilian casualties while carrying out military operations.

We hope that the Government of Iraq will continue to lead all factions to agree on a common vision for the future of the country by placing national interests above everything else and by strengthening dialogue and unity. We encourage the United Nations Assistance Mission for Iraq (UNAMI) to continue its positive role in that regard.

We believe it is essential that political dialogue and the national reconciliation of Iraq be promoted in order to consolidate progress already achieved in various fields. We welcome the recent adoption of the provincial election law, as noted by the Secretary-General in his report (S/2008/688). This law constitutes an important milestone in the political process in Iraq. Provincial elections conducted smoothly in a secure environment will further increase the inclusiveness of the political process in Iraq. We support UNAMI in its continued efforts to provide every possible support to Iraq in this regard.

For progress in the security and political fields to be effectively consolidated, economic and social reconstruction must move ahead. We call upon the international community to truly honour its pledges of aid to Iraq by helping Iraq speed up its process of reconstruction and development. We support a larger role for the meeting of foreign ministers of neighbouring countries and other mechanisms.

Under the leadership of Mr. de Mistura, UNAMI has achieved positive progress in all its activities under difficult circumstances. We express our great appreciation in that regard. We support UNAMI in its continued efforts to accomplish its mission as mandated by the Security Council. UNAMI's close consultation with the Government of Iraq and extensive outreach to all components of Iraqi society are indispensable for the smooth conduct of its activities.

Safety and security have always been the top priority of UNAMI. It is a concern that China shares. We are confident that the Government of Iraq will honour in good faith its commitments in this regard.

Mr. Arias (Panama) (*spoke in Spanish*): First of all, I would like to thank the Special Representative of the Secretary-General, Mr. Staffan de Mistura, for his briefing on behalf of the United Nations Assistance Mission for Iraq (UNAMI). Through him, I would like also to thank the entire Mission and express the gratitude of Panama for the work it has been doing. We would also like to thank the Permanent Representative of the United States, Mr. Zalmay Khalilzad, who spoke on behalf of the Multinational Force, for his briefing. Finally, we would like to welcome the Ambassador of Iraq, Mr. Hamid Al Bayati, and to thank him for his important statement to the Council.

We are pleased to see that, in spite of the serious security situation that persists in Iraq, the report of the Secretary-General (S/2008/688) gives some signs of justified optimism. Those signs of optimism are based, first and foremost, on a drop in acts of violence throughout Iraq. That is due in no small measure to the political agreements and understandings achieved among the parties in conflict, with the necessary participation of UNAMI and the leadership of the multinational forces.

The holding of provincial elections in Iraq has been a pending topic for many months, due to a lack of the necessary political agreement on establishing laws and on a suitable institutional framework in which to hold the elections. This is why we note with satisfaction the national voter registration update by the Government of Iraq, as well as the adoption of the provincial elections law, which includes the fundamental issue of the representation of minorities. My delegation recognizes the importance of those achievements for the establishment of democracy in Iraq. It is essential to continue to pay particular attention to those issues.

In spite of those advances, thousands of Iraqis continue living in very adverse humanitarian circumstances. An increase in the presence of humanitarian personnel on the ground is crucial for progress.

That is why we recognize the importance of the fact that the United Nations staff have begun to broaden their presence and activities and that different offices, agencies and programmes involved in this matter have got together to establish a permanent international presence in Baghdad. We believe that that initiative will contribute to the implementation of the

goals established in the United Nations Assistance Strategy for Iraq 2008-2010.

On the other hand, the situation of refugees and displaced persons continues to be cause for concern. We recognize the incentives provided by the Government of Iraq for the return of thousands of displaced persons, as well as the measures so that those individuals can recover their property. We urge the Government of Iraq to continue those measures.

No less important is that, as mentioned in the UNAMI report, human rights in Iraq continue to be violated regularly. In that context, we should make special mention of the thousands of people in various detention centres who continue to call for the application of international human rights standards, while they suffer ill treatment and humiliation and while basic procedural guarantees are denied them. That is why the Council should pay more attention to that serious situation and support the efforts of the United Nations bodies that are involved in this matter.

Finally, the main goal of the efforts of this Organization must be to achieve an Iraq that can live in prosperity and peace, both with itself and with its neighbours, an Iraq where human rights are promoted and respected, an Iraq that is free of occupation by multinational forces.

Mr. Laher (South Africa): We thank the Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Iraq, Mr. Staffan de Mistura, for his briefing on the activities of the United Nations Assistance Mission for Iraq (UNAMI). We also thank the representative of the United States, Ambassador Zalmay Khalilzad, for briefing us on the activities of the multinational force in Iraq.

We welcome the relatively positive developments that have taken place over the last few weeks in Iraq. They include enhanced cooperation among political groups in Iraq and between Iraq and neighbouring countries, as well as an extension of the authority of the Iraqi Government. The recent adoption of the provincial election law is also encouraging.

However, fundamental challenges remain. As the report of the Secretary-General (S/2008/688) indicates, high levels of violence continue and some important groups remain outside the political process. The Secretary-General also reports on the humanitarian plight of refugees and the serious human rights

situation, particularly the violations of human rights of civilians and detainees. That continues to be a grave concern of my Government, and we call on all parties, including the multinational force, to ensure that human rights and international humanitarian law are respected.

Persistent reports of high civilian casualty rates in military operations and of thousands of civilians being detained without being charged or afforded legal due process highlight the urgent need for greater compliance with international and Iraqi law. Moreover, the dire humanitarian situation, particularly that experienced by refugees, continues to have a negative impact on Iraqi and regional stability.

It should be emphasized that the multinational force operates in Iraq under a United Nations mandate. Consequently, its actions have a direct bearing on the credibility and reputation of this body and its ability to act as an honest broker in facilitating national reconciliation and an all-inclusive political process in Iraq, as well as constructive dialogue with its neighbours.

My delegation remains concerned about recent incidents in Syria and elsewhere where the national borders of sovereign nations are violated and innocent civilians are harmed and sometimes killed in contravention of international law.

We are pleased that the United Nations is able to play a positive role in assisting with national reconciliation, internal and regional political dialogue, resolving boundary disputes and providing constitutional and electoral support, as well as humanitarian, reconstruction and development assistance. Therefore, South Africa continues to support the presence of UNAMI in Iraq under its current mandate, in line with our commitment to multilateralism and conflict resolution.

South Africans, for their part, have been sharing their experiences in conflict resolution and national reconciliation with their Iraqi counterparts through the Helsinki II process. We hope that our national experience could offer hope for a better life for the million of Iraqis during this difficult time of their history.

In conclusion, we would like to reiterate that the Security Council has the responsibility to ensure that the powers it grants to the multinational force are exercised in a manner consistent with the decisions of

the Council and that Iraq's natural resources and the funds in the Development Fund for Iraq are used for the benefit of its people.

Mr. Ballesterro (Costa Rica) (*spoke in Spanish*): I will now speak in my national capacity. Like the other delegations that have spoken before me, I would like to thank Mr. Staffan de Mistura and Ambassador Zalmay Khalilzad for the presentations of the reports on the work of the United Nations Assistance Mission in Iraq (UNAMI) and on the multinational force in Iraq. Likewise, I would like to thank the Permanent Representative of Iraq, Ambassador Al Bayati, for his statement. For me it is always a personal pleasure to see him in this Chamber.

My delegation is pleased to take note of the positive news contained in the Secretary-General's report on UNAMI (S/2008/688) concerning the progress made in the country's reconstruction and the establishment of a federal, pluralistic and unified Iraq.

In particular, we are pleased at the holding of provincial elections next year, because we believe it is important that Iraqi authorities strengthen their legitimacy in the eyes of the all Iraqi people through the consolidating of democratic processes. We urge UNAMI to continue to contribute, through technical assistance and advice, with a transparent election process that offers representation guarantees for Iraq's citizens.

My delegation supports UNAMI and, in particular, the efforts by Mr. de Mistura in the very positive role they have played in offering the necessary electoral assistance. We believe it is fitting to remind all political players of the Security Council's support for UNAMI, to counter any attempt to manipulate in any way the results of the elections.

We are also pleased by the news of the increase in diplomatic contacts between Iraq and neighbouring countries, a process that will make possible better integration of Iraq into the regional framework and that helps to strengthen the mechanisms of dialogue and cooperation. Costa Rica believes that the stability of Iraq depends to a great extent on cooperation with its neighbours and a stable and secure relationship with them.

My delegation is also pleased to see the progress made in the development of institutional capacity in Iraq, in particular with regard to the management of

public budgets for the delivery of local services. We note the importance of implementing initiatives, such as the United Nations Assistance Strategy for Iraq 2008-2010, recently signed by the Government of Iraq and the United Nations. My country also observes that, thanks to progress in the field, as stated by the Secretary-General,

"the Government of Iraq is increasingly able to fund its own reconstruction agenda thanks to greater stability and oil revenues, which have been rising through 2008." (S/2008/688, para. 59)

Costa Rica certainly is pleased to note this.

In the midst of this positive picture, we continue to be concerned by the ongoing political violence, by terrorist attacks, as well as the deaths of civilians, which take place within the context of military operations.

Lastly, we would like to point out the Secretary-General's statement in paragraph 40 of the same report, to the effect that, "systematic human rights violations remain constant, but are less visible and less widely reported". The protection and promotion of human rights necessarily require reliable and effective reporting mechanisms. For this reason, we urge the Iraqi authorities to continue to fight this culture of

impunity, as well as the culture of silence, through the implementation of legal mechanisms to this end.

In this context, my delegation also believes that it is important that the Iraqi authorities adopt the bill to establish an independent human rights commission.

Lastly, we are concerned by the delay of the six-monthly report of the United Nations Assistance Mission for Iraq on human rights. We hope that we can soon have it before the Council.

I now resume my functions as President of the Security Council.

I have the honour of giving the floor to Mr. de Mistura to respond to the comments and questions that have been raised.

Mr. De Mistura: I will be very short in thanking every member of the Council and His Excellency the Ambassador of Iraq for the words of support and encouragement for what the United Nations Assistance Mission for Iraq and the Secretary-General's team are trying to do in Iraq. What we have been able to achieve together with the Iraqi Government has been also because the Security Council expressed trust in the Secretary-General and his team in Iraq eight months ago, and we will need that trust and support in the next coming months, because there are challenges ahead.

The meeting rose at 12.30 p.m.



Security Council

Sixty-third year

Provisional

6017th meeting

Wednesday, 19 November 2008, 10 a.m.

New York

<i>President:</i>	Mr. Arias Sánchez	(Costa Rica)
<i>Members:</i>	Belgium	Mr. Grauls
	Burkina Faso	Mr. Kafando
	China	Mr. Zhang Yesui
	Croatia	Mr. Jurica
	France	Mr. Ripert
	Indonesia	Mr. Natalegawa
	Italy	Mr. Terzi di Sant'Agata
	Libyan Arab Jamahiriya	Mr. Ettalhi
	Panama	Mr. Lewis-Navarro
	Russian Federation	Mr. Churkin
	South Africa	Mr. Kumalo
	United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland	Sir John Sawers
	United States of America	Mr. Khalilzad
	Viet Nam	Mr. Le Luong Minh

Agenda

Maintenance of international peace and security

Strengthening collective security through general regulation and reduction of armaments

Letter dated 10 November 2008 from the Permanent Representative of Costa Rica to the United Nations addressed to the President of the Security Council (S/2008/697)

This record contains the text of speeches delivered in English and of the interpretation of speeches delivered in the other languages. The final text will be printed in the *Official Records of the Security Council*. Corrections should be submitted to the original languages only. They should be incorporated in a copy of the record and sent under the signature of a member of the delegation concerned to the Chief of the Verbatim Reporting Service, room C-154A.



The meeting was called to order at 10.20 a.m.

Adoption of the agenda

The agenda was adopted.

Maintenance of international peace and security

Strengthening collective security through general regulation and reduction of armaments

Letter dated 10 November 2008 from the Permanent Representative of Costa Rica to the United Nations addressed to the President of the Security Council (S/2008/697)

The President (*spoke in Spanish*): I should like to inform the Council that I have received letters from the representatives of Argentina, Armenia, Australia, Austria, Bolivia, Brazil, Canada, Chile, Colombia, Ecuador, Guatemala, Japan, Mexico, Morocco, Nigeria, Norway, Pakistan, Qatar, Spain, Switzerland and the United Republic of Tanzania, in which they request to be invited to participate in the consideration of the item on the Council's agenda.

In conformity with the usual practice, I propose, with the consent of the Council, to invite those representatives to participate in the consideration without the right to vote, in accordance with the relevant provision of the Charter and rule 37 of the Council's provisional rules of procedure.

There being no objection, it is so decided.

On behalf of the Council, I extend a warm welcome to His Excellency Mr. Renan Fuentealba, Special Envoy of the President of Chile.

At the invitation of the President, the representatives of the aforementioned countries took the seats reserved for them at the side of the Council Chamber.

The President (*spoke in Spanish*): In accordance with the understanding reached in the course of the Council's prior consultations, I shall take it that the Security Council agrees to extend an invitation, under rule 39 of its provisional rules of procedure, to Mr. Sergio Duarte, High Representative for Disarmament Affairs.

There being no objection, it is so decided.

I invite Mr. Duarte to take a seat at the Council table.

In accordance with the understanding reached in the course of the Council's prior consultations, I shall take it that the Security Council agrees to extend an invitation, under rule 39 of its provisional rules of procedure, to Archbishop Celestino Migliore, Apostolic Nuncio, Permanent Observer of the Holy See to the United Nations.

There being no objection, it is so decided.

I invite the Permanent Observer of the Holy See to take the seat reserved for him at the side of the Council Chamber.

The Security Council will now begin its consideration of the item on its agenda.

I wish to draw the Council's attention to document S/2008/697, containing a letter dated 10 November 2008 from the Permanent Representative of Costa Rica, transmitting a concept paper on the item under consideration.

Costa Rica has convened this thematic debate on strengthening collective security and arms regulation with the objective of considering what is contained in Article 26 of the Charter. That Article gives to the Security Council the express mandate of promoting the establishment and maintenance of international peace and security with the least diversion for armaments of the world's economic and human resources. We must take action to achieve this noble objective.

I believe that we have the obligation to reflect upon the role entrusted to this Council to promote international peace and security. And I believe that this is an opportune moment to consider the instruments that can be used to achieve those objectives. Among them is the strengthening of both regional and global multilateral mechanisms and, without a doubt, arms control and regulation. The dialogue that we are proposing today should not be an isolated event in the struggle to build better well-being. We must begin on a path of reflection and action which will bring us to a more rational use of available resources and, without undermining security, will ensure greater development.

This is a particularly opportune moment. On one hand, arms races are developing in many situations around the world. On the other hand, there are the crises that afflict us. The food crisis, the environmental crisis, the energy crisis and the economic crisis are impeding efforts to improve the lives of those who are condemned to poverty, ignorance and ill-health. It

would appear that the time has come for us to recognize the link that exists between the squandering of resources on arms and the need for those resources to advance us to greater levels of human development. This is what we must do after having recognized that peace and security, development and human rights are the pillars of this Organization and the basis of our collective security and wellbeing. Today we need to go beyond words. The dialogue that we are starting now must lead us to action.

At this meeting, the Security Council will hear a statement on behalf of the Secretary-General by Mr. Sergio Duarte, High Representative for Disarmament Affairs. I invite Mr. Duarte to take the floor.

Mr. Duarte: It is a pleasure to send the Secretary-General's greetings to the Security Council on the occasion of this important debate on the strengthening of collective security.

Achieving a sense of collective security is a vital step towards preventing conflict. As we know all too well, organizations tend to be better equipped for reacting to developments than for anticipating them. But we cannot be passive in the face of threats to international peace and security. That is why conflict prevention is very high on my agenda and why the international community must strengthen its ability to minimize the potential for conflict.

The strengthening of collective security can build trust between States. And it can pave the way for agreements and cooperation in other fields, steadily tying countries together in a web of shared interest, better understanding and mutual support.

The strengthening of collective security through general regulation and reduction of armaments was a central preoccupation of the League of Nations. When the United Nations was established, the issue of minimizing the diversion of the world's human and economic resources for armaments was given a place in the Charter along with disarmament.

No serious discussion on the limitation or elimination of armaments can avoid the topic of improving transparency. If States behave in a predictable and transparent way, that can build confidence and thereby promote collective security.

Member States have developed two transparency instruments within the framework of the United

Nations. First is the Standardized Instrument for Reporting Military Expenditures. This will be reviewed in 2010 for the first time. Secondly is the United Nations Register of Conventional Arms, to which Member States may report their arms imports and exports, as well as data on their military holdings and production in specific categories of major conventional weapons. Over the years, Member States have agreed to steadily widen the scope of the Register. Significantly, in 2003 they decided that States could include their transfers of small arms. Far more than half of all United Nations Member States have participated in both instruments. I would hope to see even greater involvement, as well as more consistent reporting.

But let us remember that transparency in armaments is only one of several criteria that the world community is seeking to enshrine in multilateral agreements in the fields of disarmament and arms regulation. Others include irreversibility, verification and the degree to which signatories are bound by an agreement. To the extent that such criteria are accepted by States and implemented in good faith, prospects for achieving the full potential of collective security will grow.

I welcome the recognition by the Security Council that progress in disarmament and the regulation of armaments can make important contributions to strengthening international security, to the benefit of all. All Member States and their populations have a stake in security. Security is a common good and, as such, has value only when it is shared with others.

The President (spoke in Spanish): I thank Mr. Duarte for his statement.

In accordance with the understanding reached among Council members, I wish to remind all speakers to limit their statements to no more than five minutes in order to enable the Council to carry out its work expeditiously. Delegations with lengthy statements are kindly requested to circulate the written text and to deliver a condensed version when speaking in the Chamber.

I am pleased to welcome the presence in the Council table of the Vice-President and Minister for Foreign Affairs of Panama, His Excellency Mr. Samuel Lewis-Navarro. I invite him to take the floor.

Mr. Lewis-Navarro (Panama) (*spoke in Spanish*): First of all, I would like to congratulate the President of Costa Rica on his initiative of putting forward this important subject for discussion today. Panama, a country where people of different races, religions and cultures live together in peace and harmony, cannot but seek the strengthening of multilateral collective security mechanisms and the rule of law.

At the 2005 World Summit, our leaders adopted a multidimensional approach to security by linking security, human rights and development. That requires us to make greater multilateral efforts to achieve disarmament and the elimination of weapons of mass destruction and thereby limit military expenditure to bring capabilities in line with the legitimate needs for defence and security.

However, at the present time, the greatest challenges to international peace and security arise not from wars between States or territorial invasions, but from internal conflicts, transnational organized crime and the failure of States. For that reason, our greater concern should be the continued trade in small arms and light weapons, which feed criminality and armed conflict everywhere. The illicit trafficking of weapons is one of the main challenges to international peace and security today. Their illegal trade represents a quarter of global trade, a large part of which is directed towards conflict situations.

The Security Council has addressed that situation many times by imposing arms embargoes, which have effectively served to reduce the number of victims. However, another significant effect of that trade has been to exacerbate serious social problems. Those arms are more devastating and lethal than weapons of mass destruction. Their accumulative effect, measured in the number of dead and wounded and their social cost, are sufficiently worrying to impel us to act resolutely to put a stop to this plague, which threatens humankind.

The international community has established a number of international agreements to prevent the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction that have significantly increased international cooperation. However, with regard to small arms and weapons, all we currently have is a non-binding Programme of Action, in which little more than two thirds of Member States participate. That initiative will be insufficient until States that manufacture small arms and light

weapons incorporate its provisions into a binding instrument allowing greater efficiency and effectiveness in fighting the illicit traffic in arms. For our part, in order to contribute to that goal at the local level, the Government of President Martín Torrijos has promulgated legislation to impose greater control over those activities in our country.

However, such initiatives are not enough. Given the scale of the impact of small arms and light weapons, the lack of equal efforts with respect to the production and trafficking of armaments is inexcusable. Without regulation and international monitoring, it will not be possible to reduce the global impact of the legal sale of weapons. Just as there are controls over the production and transit of nuclear materials, so we should be able to trace the production of small arms. We need to consider how to achieve compatible standards and configure global databases for the exchange of information among regulatory bodies.

We know that the Charter of the United Nations recognizes the right of Member States to legitimate self-defence, but curbing the illegal traffic in weapons or regulating their legal trade in no way affect that right. Regulations that could be established or measures that could be adopted would not interfere with the right of States to protect themselves for domestic or international crime.

Lastly, I cannot conclude, Sir, without recognizing the efforts that you have been making to ensure visibility for this issue at the national and international levels. We can only hope that they are successful.

Mr. Le Luong Minh (Viet Nam): I thank you, Sir, and the delegation of Costa Rica for taking the initiative to organize this debate of the Security Council on the issue of strengthening collective security through general regulation and reduction of armaments. I thank you for personally presiding over today's debate.

I would like to extend a warm welcome to Mr. Samuel Lewis-Navarro, Vice-President and Minister for Foreign Affairs of Panama.

As we debate the issue of general regulation and reduction of armaments as a means to strengthen collective security today, global military expenditure and the arms trade represent the largest spending in the world at over \$1 trillion a year and keep rising. At the

same time, nearly 1 billion people in the world are living in extreme poverty, with all sorts of threats posed by global issues, such as epidemics, environmental pollution, climate change and terrorism, which are difficult to solve owing to, among other things, the lack of funds.

Those realities in the context of the post-cold-war period, the end of which promised the contrary, once again point to what the Secretary-General of our Organization rightly said back in 2004 in his note on the findings on the relationship between disarmament and development since 1987:

"Excessive armament and military spending can have negative impact on development and divert financial, technological and human resources from development objectives [because]... their spread and availability can threaten physical safety, endanger stability and welfare and diminish social and economic confidence, thus discouraging investment and economic development and contributing to a cycle of poverty, underdevelopment and distress." (A/59/119, para. 18)

The outbreak or the continuation and intensification of hostilities in hot spots under examination by the Security Council, especially in Africa and even in the heart of Europe recently, further points to the fact that what the Secretary-General has warned of as a possibility was and continues to be a reality and makes more pertinent the commitment of Member States, as enshrined in Article 26 of the Charter,

"to promote the establishment and maintenance of international peace and security with the least diversion for armaments of the world's human and economic resources".

Sharing the common understanding that the reduction of armaments and development are two distinct, yet mutually reinforcing processes that are linked by security in all its aspects, my delegation also shares the widely-held view that measures aimed at achieving the regulation and reduction of armaments as a means to strengthen collective security must be based on and carried out in the spirit of multilateralism and in accordance with international law and the United Nations Charter.

In that connection, we stress the central role of the United Nations, especially the General Assembly —

whose membership has increased nearly fourfold since the birth of the Organization and its Charter — as well as its disarmament-related bodies, such as the Disarmament Commission and the Conference on Disarmament, which, to the general dismay of Member States, have been idle for many years without substantive agendas or work programmes.

While witnessing the constant rise in global military spending to more than \$1 trillion per year, as I mentioned above — nearly 40 per cent higher than it was 10 years ago — but with only about \$20 billion per year to spend on its programmes in all areas, the United Nations, which was founded with the purpose of maintaining international peace and security and achieving international cooperation in solving international problems of an economic, social, cultural or humanitarian character, must be able to contribute to narrowing the gap between what countries are prepared to allocate for military means, on the one hand, and to alleviate poverty and promote economic development, on the other.

By its resolution 1809 (2008), the Security Council underlines the importance of strengthening the capacity of regional and subregional organizations in conflict prevention, crisis management and post-conflict stabilization. Regional organizations obviously play an important role in enhancing the security of the States of their region and reducing the risk of regional conflict, thus contributing to the maintenance of international peace and security by promoting regional disarmament, taking into account the specific characteristics of each region and in accordance with the principle of undiminished security at the lowest level of armaments. The establishment of nuclear-weapon-free zones in various parts of the world testifies to the role that regional organizations can play and indeed have played in nuclear disarmament and the non-proliferation regime, which is high on the agenda of the Security Council.

In the changed international context and with the emergence of terrorism, the tendency — here and there and now and then — to move away from seeking multilateral solutions to questions of disarmament and security, the phenomena of underdevelopment and poverty and the continued arms race in many regions of the world are contributing factors to the insecurity of many countries. It is therefore more important than ever to strengthen cooperation and coordination between the Security Council and other United Nations

bodies — above all, the General Assembly, the Economic and Social Council and the Peacebuilding Commission — as well as with regional and subregional organizations, in promoting collective security, armament regulation and disarmament, and demobilization and reintegration. Those should be complementary measures for peacekeeping and peacebuilding efforts and for ensuring implementation by Member States of their commitments under the international treaties to which they are party. Viet Nam looks forward to contributing to strengthening such cooperation and coordination.

Once again, I thank you, Sir, and your delegation for this initiative and for the draft presidential statement, which we are ready to support.

Sir John Sawers (United Kingdom): I would like to begin by thanking you, Sir, for convening this meeting today and to pay tribute to your lifelong commitment to disarmament, both regionally and globally. It is very fitting that, as a Nobel Peace Prize laureate, you are here presiding over the Council with its primary responsibility for the maintenance of international peace and security. I thank you for being here.

We also welcome back to the Council Vice-President Lewis-Navarro of Panama and thank him for his statement. Our thanks go also to Mr. Sergio Duarte, High Representative for Disarmament Affairs, for his concise briefing.

The United Kingdom shares the determination to look afresh at the challenges facing us in the field of disarmament. We are working with partners to strengthen all pillars of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) and to promote an arms trade treaty to implement high common standards for conventional arms exports, which are, of course, the weapons of daily destruction around the world. And it is why, for the United Kingdom, arms control, counter-proliferation and disarmament are about finding common ground to enhance our collective security, which is at the heart of everything we do at the United Nations, and especially here in the Security Council.

The United Kingdom also welcomes the principle promoted by this debate of mainstreaming disarmament into development policy. That is particularly important in the fields of conventional weapons and small arms and light weapons, and in the

disarmament and demobilization of armed groups and their reintegration into their communities.

The United Kingdom is committed to strengthening the Non-Proliferation Treaty. We will show zero tolerance for proliferation and we will work for a world free from nuclear weapons. There must be progress on both sides of that, on both nuclear disarmament and on non-proliferation and to support progress on non-proliferation, we need a reinvigorated approach to nuclear disarmament. We are therefore calling for further reductions in the major nuclear arsenals and for progress on the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty and negotiations towards a fissile material cut-off treaty.

In the meantime, the United Kingdom has been undertaking innovative work to address some of the technical challenges posed by disarmament. We have reduced our nuclear arsenal to just 160 operationally available warheads and we have offered to host a conference for the permanent five to discuss the technical aspects of disarmament verification.

On the other side of the coin, proliferation of the nuclear-fuel cycle poses grave dangers to regional and global stability, as it paves the way for the proliferation of nuclear weapons technology. Multilateral nuclear fuel assurances provide a possible way for States to enhance their collective security and their energy diversity by exercising their rights under article IV of the NPT, while avoiding proliferation of the most sensitive nuclear technologies.

Proliferation concerns are not only limited to nuclear technologies and material; other emerging technologies contain threats as well as opportunities, which is why the Chemical Weapons Convention and the Biological and Toxin Weapons Convention remain so important in this century.

On small arms and light weapons, the United Kingdom welcomes the progress at the Biennial Meeting of States on implementing fully the United Nations Programme of Action, and collectively we have made real progress in the important field of anti-personnel landmines, covered by the Ottawa Convention. I would like to confirm the United Kingdom's strong support for the universalization of the Convention and for the worldwide implementation of its provisions on stockpile destruction and mine clearance. The United Kingdom is the third-largest donor to mine clearance programmes in affected

countries, where anti-personnel landmines still pose a serious humanitarian threat.

The United Kingdom also welcomes the successful negotiation, earlier this year at the Dublin Conference, of a new treaty that bans cluster munitions, a whole class of weapons. The end result is a Convention that will make a major contribution to addressing the humanitarian threat posed by such weapons. We plan to sign the Convention on Cluster Munitions on 3 December, in two weeks' time. My Prime Minister has made it a personal commitment to work with other countries to promote the widest possible adherence to the norms of the new Convention. We in the United Kingdom have ceased to use such weapons. We have begun the process of withdrawing them from service and placing them in a destruction programme, and we have also added cluster munitions to the list of items prohibited for transfer.

I would like to conclude my remarks by reaffirming the importance of the proposed arms trade treaty. Achieving such a treaty is a goal that you, Mr. President, have championed at the United Nations and in Central and Latin America, and I pay tribute to your personal commitment. An arms trade treaty has a significant role to play in ensuring collective international security. With one person killed every 90 seconds by a conventional weapon, the irresponsible trade in conventional weapons creates instability and has a direct impact on countries' ability to deliver sustainable development and to achieve the Millennium Development Goals. An arms trade treaty would address the issue of irresponsible trade and would thereby contribute positively to international peace and security.

A number of countries have concerns about the proposal, and those concerns must be addressed openly and honestly. But a properly regulated arms trade would be to the benefit of all: to our peacekeepers around the world; to law enforcement and security forces in Member States; to the business community that manufactures and sells arms and wants to do that responsibly; and, above all, to ordinary people whose lives are shattered by our failure to control the unscrupulous and irresponsible trade in arms.

Thank you once again, Mr. President, for bringing this issue to the Security Council and for elevating our debate through your presence.

Mr. Khalilzad (United States of America): I would like to thank the Costa Rican delegation for bringing us together for a discussion of this important subject. Costa Rica's dedication to fostering peace through the promotion of disarmament is well known, as is your personal commitment, Mr. President; we are honoured by your presence. We also welcome the presence of Mr. Samuel Lewis-Navarro, Vice-President and Minister for Foreign Affairs of Panama, and we thank Mr. Sergio Duarte for his statement.

The United States recognizes the role of the United Nations in promoting the maintenance of international peace and security and the responsibilities of all United Nations Member States in that regard. To that end, the United States has taken a leading role in promoting arms reduction and fighting proliferation, particularly of weapons of mass destruction.

The United States recognizes that multilateral engagement is an important tool in curbing armaments and in blocking weapons proliferation. Treaties can play a role, but so can voluntary associations. In 2003, the United States launched the Proliferation Security Initiative (PSI), a dynamic, active approach to the global proliferation problem. Today, more than 90 participating member States work voluntarily and in concert, employing their national capabilities to develop a broad range of legal, diplomatic, economic, military and other tools to interdict threatening shipments of weapons of mass destruction and missile-related equipment and technologies. The United States also participates alongside 39 other States in the Wassenaar Arrangement, a voluntary export control regime that governs both conventional weapons and dual-use items. We hope that additional States will join the United States in participating in the PSI and adopting the Wassenaar Arrangement's export control list. The United States has also taken a leading role in reducing the illicit trade in small arms and light weapons through its assistance programmes in such areas as destruction, stockpile security and the marking of weapons.

Of course, action within the United Nations is also important. The United States, for its part, has introduced a draft resolution at the current session of the General Assembly that reaffirms Member States' commitment to full compliance with arms control agreements and commitments. The United Nations has also developed a Programme of Action on the illicit trade in small arms and light weapons and produced a

consensus report (A/61/1028) that includes the recommendations of experts on verification in all its aspects.

More specifically, the Security Council has a role to play as well. Security Council resolution 1540 (2004) is an unprecedented initiative and a good example of the type of contribution that the United Nations can make to promoting international cooperation in the area of non-proliferation. While the scope of the resolution includes terrorist activities, it was designed to address the full range of proliferation activities, including those of non-State actors that provide proliferation-related services. The resolution also places requirements on United Nations Member States to take specific measures to criminalize activities that can contribute to or support proliferation activities.

The Security Council Committee established pursuant to resolution 1540 (2004) has an important role to play in promoting implementation of the resolution. In addition, the resolution advances the economic interests of nations seeking to become global economic suppliers of goods and services.

The United States and several other States have extensive programmes that can help Member nations implement resolution 1540 (2004), and we stand ready to do more. We believe that the Council can play a role in bolstering that effort and others, not least by calling on States to live up to their obligations under Council decisions and other binding undertakings.

The reduction of armaments is an important goal for many United Nations Member States, and, particularly under the right circumstances, it can increase security and contribute to enhanced development.

Mr. Churkin (Russian Federation) (*spoke in Russian*): We are gratified to welcome Mr. Óscar Arias Sánchez, President of Costa Rica, to the presidency of the Security Council.

The issues of disarmament, non-proliferation and arms control cannot be considered in isolation from today's overall security situation. The Russian Federation tirelessly advocates the development of an equitable system of collective security, which would enable us to address together the growing spectrum of threats and challenges.

The very logic of the development of today's international relations reveals the bankruptcy of unilateral and bloc mechanisms, in particular those based on force. We believe that an important role in strengthening the collective security architecture must be played by peacekeeping mechanisms, in particular those established within the United Nations framework. Here, significant experience has been accumulated and numerous successes achieved. In that connection, we note that United Nations activities for the maintenance of peace are constantly evolving in both conceptual and operational terms. That promotes the resolution of emerging problems and effective responses to new political realities.

At the same time, we note that, to date, the problem of ensuring the level of military expertise required for action within the framework of United Nations peacekeeping operations remains unresolved. The thrust of Russia's initiative, proposed at the Millennium Summit, to intensify the activities of the Military Staff Committee lies in involving that body in fact-finding missions and inspection groups to assess the combat readiness of troops and equipment allocated for participation in peacekeeping operations. That would provide timely and relevant information to the Security Council. As experience has shown, there is a growing understanding at the United Nations that we must improve the quality of our work on various aspects of the problem as we make decisions relating to United Nations peacekeeping. I should also like to remind members that we complemented our initiative with a proposal that the Committee work in a full format with all 15 Security Council members.

In today's complex international situation, it is more pressing than ever to ensure collective actions and to strengthen the legal basis for regional and global policies based on the United Nations Charter and the recognition of the indivisibility of security and development in today's world. It will be possible to achieve that task only by setting up open collective security mechanisms including in the Euro-Atlantic region. We are convinced that security is needed not from each other, and especially not against any person, but from transboundary threats.

The President of the Russian Federation, Dmitry Medvedev, set out a positive alternative to the further escalation of tensions in the Euro-Atlantic area. I refer to the development of a legally binding treaty on European security. In our view, such a document would

enable us to create a sound system of comprehensive, unitary and indivisible security on the basis of the principles of polycentricity, the primacy of international law, and the central role of the United Nations, the inadmissibility of isolating particular States, and the existence of zones with different levels of security. Our proposal for a positive programme of action would enable us, in practice, to establish a fair basis for cooperation among all States.

Preserving the primacy of the disarmament process, non-proliferation and arms control is the alternative to expensive confrontation and a new arms race. The further legal and treaty development of the disarmament process, including on a multilateral and universal basis, must be carried out in a spirit of strategic openness.

Russia, for its part, spares no effort to ensure that disarmament, first and foremost nuclear disarmament, is ongoing and irreversible in nature. Since 1991, the Russian nuclear arsenal has been reduced by a factor of five and the overall stockpile of tactical nuclear weapons by three-quarters. The Moscow Treaty on Strategic Offensive Reductions is being implemented successfully. The Strategic Offensive Arms Reduction Treaty (START) has fully achieved its objectives and will expire in December 2009. We are talking with the United States about a new legally binding treaty to replace it. We believe that it could include all the best elements of START and set out new, lower verifiable levels for strategic delivery means, i.e. intercontinental ballistic missiles, under-water ballistic missiles and heavy bombers, as well as the warheads carried by them.

We want to bolster existing non-proliferation regimes of weapons of mass destruction, including the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT). Global security and protection against possible missile threats would be strengthened by making the Treaty on the Elimination of Intermediate-Range and Shorter-Range Missiles universal.

In the First Committee in October 2007, Russia and the United States made a joint statement calling upon all interested States to discuss possible universalization of the innovative Treaty on intermediate and short-range missiles regime by eliminating ground-based ballistic and cruise missiles with a range of 500-5,500 kilometres, leading to the

destruction of that class of missiles and the termination of any related programmes.

Issues of strategic stability are directly related to the problem of States' activities in outer space. A key area of work here remains developing effective measures to prevent the deployment of any class of weapons into outer space in order to prevent turning outer space into a new area of military confrontation and a potential theatre for military activities.

In February 2008, the Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Russian Federation, Sergey V. Lavrov, on behalf of Russia and China, introduced at the United Nations Disarmament Conference in Geneva a draft of such a treaty. We expect that the Conference will step up activities in this field. We call for support for the initiative submitted by Russia and other member States of the Collective Security Treaty Organization and for accession to the moratorium on the first deployment of any type of weapons in outer space. Measures aimed at strengthening transparency and confidence in space activities would serve to reduce motivation to deploy weapons in outer space.

We are grateful to all States having backed Russia's initiative in the First Committee. Here, I am referring to the traditional draft resolution on this issue.

Another priority for us lies in the field of international information security. The aim of our efforts within the United Nations is to help enhance the security of the international information space, prevent humankind from being dragged into another cycle of arms race — this time at a qualitatively new technological level — preserve resources intended for development purposes, including financial resources, and contain the risks of information and communication technologies and resources being used for purposes running counter to the interests of States in the sphere of security. We would also like to thank all States that supported the draft resolution on the subject submitted in the First Committee.

Turning now to control of conventional weapons transfers, we are seeing today a sort of renaissance, running from manufacturing to stockpiling and use by importers. Serious concerns arise from the illicit trafficking in arms, first and foremost small arms and light weapons, which heightens the likelihood of them falling into the hands of terrorists and irresponsible users.

The crisis in the Caucasus in August showed the inadequacy of current arms transfer mechanisms, including the various codes and understandings within the framework of the Wassenaar Arrangement. Clearly, the time has come to conduct a serious study of this field, determine the main problems and outline ways to resolve them.

By way of conclusion, I would like to note that Russia backs the adoption of a presidential statement on strengthening international security and the regulation of armaments. We anticipate that this will provide significant political impetus to our common efforts in this field.

Mr. Kafando (Burkina Faso) (*spoke in French*): I would like to tell you, Mr. President, how happy our delegation is to see you personally chairing this important debate on the strengthening of collective security through the reduction of armaments and general regulation, which is a pressing subject and goes right to the heart of the Security Council's responsibilities.

We are also grateful to your delegation, Mr. President, for the concept paper that was drawn up and for the draft presidential statement that was proposed.

A safer world, forever rid of war, was the main objective that guided the founders of the United Nations. Today, this unflinching pursuit of security for all continues to be of our concern and States seek to join efforts, in particular diplomatic and military efforts, to preserve humanity from a new specter of war, which, this time, could lead to a nuclear disaster.

For this, we must have rules that take into account the control, reduction and regulation of armament. With this in mind, we need to recognize that, from its beginnings, the United Nations has contributed to establishing the present disarmament architecture, in particular, enabling the Conference on Disarmament to negotiate and conclude the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty, the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty, as well as the Conventions on chemical and biological weapons.

However, we still face an unprecedented threat that is due essentially to the excessive accumulation of weapons of mass destruction, such as nuclear, chemicals and biological weapons, as well as to the

constant increase in military budgets and the risk of the militarization of outer space.

Additionally, cluster munitions, conventional weapons, and small arms and light weapons continue to cause enormous suffering to civilian populations as well as significant material damage.

In view of this situation, we can only deplore the lethargy in the two frameworks of multilateral negotiation, that is, the Conference on Disarmament and the United Nations Disarmament Commission.

We have not met with any further success with regard to the efforts to strengthen the legal framework of and cooperation on these issues undertaken by the General Assembly, and so we must recognize that, in spite of sustained action within the United Nations, which has contributed to greater awareness of the need to act, the United Nations has not been able to carry out its mandate with necessary effectiveness. All of this undermines the objective of collective security, of which, in terms of the Charter, the United Nations in general, and the Security Council in particular, are guarantors.

Although we recognize that control and regulation of armaments is a very complex task vis-à-vis the interests at stake, Burkina Faso is convinced that the need to ensure effective security should give that task priority over any other consideration.

Apart from the numerous victims they take, these arms are a constant threat for flare-ups in entire regions. That is why we need without delay to address the challenge of their control and regulation. In the hope of succeeding in this area, Burkina Faso believes that we need to seek a new consensus around collective security, with responsibility shared by all actors on the international stage.

This is indeed possible, in the light of the convincing results obtained by other actors outside of the United Nations framework, such as the achievements of the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS), in the areas of control, limitation and regulation of armaments in the delicate subregion of West Africa. In June 2006 the member countries of ECOWAS established the Convention on Small Arms, Light Weapons, Their Ammunition, and Other Associated Materials with the purpose of regulating small arms and light weapons within ECOWAS and reducing their proliferation. Neither

should we forget the historic agreement reached in Dublin on the Convention on Cluster Munitions. That agreement was reached outside of the current United Nations disarmament framework by a number of States, civil society, the International Committee of the Red Cross and the United Nations. Those two examples show how important a role can be played on the international scene by other actors in the realm of disarmament.

Burkina Faso adheres to the principles and recommendations of the Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects, and we are therefore setting out to effectively implement these measures nationally through training and control of weapons flows, carried out by our National Commission against small arms and light weapons and the High National Authority to combat the importation and exportation of small weapons, their ammunition and their use.

As a State party to the main legal instruments on disarmament, Burkina Faso will continue to support all relevant initiatives.

To conclude, in order to give fresh impetus to our collective action to reduce and regulate armaments, my delegation wishes to make the following specific proposals: renew the disarmament architecture by proposing new approaches; strengthen confidence-building measures among producer countries; ensure compliance with and strengthen the present legal framework; strengthen and support the capacities of regional and subregional organizations; and strengthen international cooperation.

Mr. Natalegawa (Indonesia): Let me first of all join previous speakers in thanking the delegation of Costa Rica for convening this open debate and in welcoming you, Mr. President, as you personally chair this very important high-level debate. We should also like to warmly acknowledge the participation of His Excellency Mr. Samuel Lewis-Navarro, Vice-President and Minister for Foreign Affairs of Panama.

The issue of collective security and disarmament continues to be one of the most critical and enduring issues on the agenda of the United Nations. At a time when the world needs precious resources for development, there is no doubting the need to reduce, and eventually eliminate, nuclear weapons and other weapons of mass destruction, as well as to restrain the

vast military expenditures on conventional arms. This is even more urgent when considered in the light of the need to address several global economic and social crises and achieve the Millennium Development Goals and other development goals. Military spending and the insecurity caused by proliferation emerge clearly as challenging hurdles to the implementation of our multilateral objectives.

The United Nations and its bodies have been seized of this issue for a long time. Numerous decisions and resolutions of the General Assembly have long been devoted to disarmament. Yet, large stockpiles of weapons of mass destruction still threaten our existence. On top of the insecurity that this has caused, countries continue to increase military spending and invest in even more armaments in the quest for a higher level of security. Resources that ought to be invested in peace and development are thrown into this effort, which is fuelled by the fear that by disarming or reducing armaments they would compromise their security. A way must be found to end this trend.

Indonesia has been among the countries that seek to break that vicious cycle by consistently supporting the objective of regulating arms, and of disarmament, particularly as regards weapons of mass destruction. It is our firm belief that reduction in armaments and the total elimination of weapons of mass destruction would create a stable atmosphere and the confidence to further increase the level of security.

In the face of stagnation in the efforts towards disarmament and the regulation of armaments — most conspicuously the inability of the Conference on Disarmament to move forward with its work for over a decade now — and the continuing increase in global military expenditure, we think this is an opportune time for the Security Council to make a contribution to the effort to find a solution.

We, therefore, encourage the Council to play its proper role, in cooperation with the General Assembly and other relevant bodies. However, in doing so, we would like to emphasize that the Council should not act as a legislative body. Whatever plan is formulated by the Council should be consistent with Article 26 of the United Nations Charter, be submitted to Member States for their consideration.

We believe that, as a complement to multilateral arrangements, a regional approach to collective

security and disarmament may contribute to enhancing efforts towards arms reduction and confidence-building measures. On the model of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) Security Community, regional security would be based on sharing norms and rules of good conduct in inter-State relations, effective conflict resolution and prevention mechanisms and post-conflict peacebuilding activities. It would also promote political development, which would reinforce political stability. The shaping and sharing of norms in ASEAN is also crucial to building peace in the wider Asia-Pacific region. The Treaty of Amity and Cooperation in Southeast Asia is a code of conduct for relations between ASEAN and external Powers. Signatories and acceding States renounce the use of force and bind themselves to peaceful settlement of disputes in the region, serving as a model for other regions. The South-East Asia Nuclear-Weapon-Free Zone is a further ASEAN contribution to the non-proliferation and disarmament agenda.

Indonesia advocates a world in which financial and other resources now being squandered on the acquisition, development and maintenance of armaments are allocated to pressing humanitarian and development needs, both by countries that manufacture and produce arms and by those who trade in or purchase them.

We would therefore appreciate a more active role by the Security Council on the issue of reduction and regulation of armaments, and disarmament, like that of other forums. But, more important, regardless of the forum, we call for political will among all Member States to recognize this issue for its unusual win-win potential: to strengthen international peace and security while also liberating immense resources worldwide that can be used to guarantee development and general human advancement.

Mr. Terzi di Sant'Agata (Italy): At the outset, Mr. President, I wish to express our deepest appreciation for your presence today. Our appreciation goes also to the delegation of Costa Rica for convening this debate on strengthening collective security through general regulation and reduction of armaments.

I have been asked by my Government to convey to Your Excellency a sincere welcome, underlining the high significance of you presiding over this Council today. I would also like to express appreciation to the Vice-President and Minister for Foreign Affairs of

Panama, His Excellency Samuel Lewis-Navarro, for being here today and delivering his statement, and to the High Representative of for Disarmament Affairs, Mr. Duarte, for his statement.

Italy aligns itself with the statement that the representative of the French presidency of the European Union will deliver on behalf of the Union.

Today's debate provides us with an opportunity to examine the relationship between disarmament and peace and security and to reaffirm our commitment to an effective multilateral system centred on the United Nations as the best framework for coordinated action in this field.

The link between peace and security, development and human rights is clear and undisputed. We are all committed to pursuing these goals together, knowing that there can be no peace and security without the fulfilment of basic needs and no economic development without the rule of law and respect for human rights.

This connection between security, development and human rights means that gains in one area translate into positive consequences for the other two. Disarmament can indeed free up resources for development, while an effective collective security system can reduce the need for military expenditures by individual States. Member States should feel that their security concerns are better addressed in a multilateral framework than in an arms race. Strengthening collective security arrangements at both the global and regional levels can therefore generate the confidence needed to promote disarmament.

The Security Council has a specific and special role to play. To be credible, it must be able to address crises at an early stage, prevent them from degenerating into open conflicts and find solutions when they do. Close cooperation with regional organizations and arrangements is often crucial. The Council has often debated the role of regional organizations and favoured their role in managing the crises that concern them directly. A new security consensus to effectively face today's multifaceted threats should be based on a close relationship between the Security Council and regional organizations.

In 1993, the United Nations Disarmament Commission adopted guidelines and recommendations for regional approaches to disarmament. Regional and

global approaches to disarmament are complementary and should be pursued simultaneously. The toolbox of arms control and confidence-building measures developed in Europe, for example, could make a useful contribution to the global efforts of the United Nations.

In addition to the Security Council's primary responsibility for the maintenance of peace and security, we would like to highlight the efforts of other United Nations bodies, namely the General Assembly, its two subsidiary bodies — the First Committee and the Disarmament Commission — and the Conference on Disarmament. The United Nations Office for Disarmament Affairs and its regional centres also play an important role.

The First Committee's role in setting the global disarmament agenda cannot be overstated. Nor can the Disarmament Commission's guidelines, which provide the relevant standards for the establishment of nuclear-weapon-free zones. Italy has always supported the fundamental norm-setting activities of the Disarmament Commission and is committed to the immediate start and early conclusion of negotiations of a non-discriminatory, universally applicable treaty banning the production of fissile material for nuclear weapons.

Therefore, we fully support efforts to make these United Nations bodies more effective. Their broad membership makes them an expression of the entire international community. This is crucial, because United Nations efforts in the field of disarmament and international security cannot succeed unless they enjoy the broadest political support.

Mr. Zhang Yesui (China) (*spoke in Chinese*): At the outset, I wish to express a warm welcome to His Excellency Óscar Arias Sánchez, who has come to the United Nations to preside over today's Security Council meeting. The theme of this open debate is collective security and armaments regulation, a topic that is of vital importance to the maintenance of international peace and security. I would like to express my appreciation for this initiative by Costa Rica.

Our contemporary world is undergoing great changes and readjustments. The international security situation is also undergoing a complex and profound transformation. The latest developments have pointed to a need for the international community to consider

and review its international security concepts against this new background.

The maintenance of peace and stability and the promotion of development and cooperation are aspirations shared by the international community. In our view, we should work in the following areas in order to promote international security and build a global consensus, so as to revitalize the international arms control, disarmament and non-proliferation process.

First, it is imperative to promote, on the basis of mutual trust, mutual benefit, equality and assistance, the common security of all countries and remove the root causes of the factors that endanger peace and security. While safeguarding their own security interests, all countries and groups of countries should fully respect and accommodate the legitimate concerns of other countries. Actions that are taken in disregard of the security interests of other countries and regions, or actions that undermine such interests, will ultimately diminish and weaken the credibility of the relevant principles of international law and may jeopardize the security of our nations.

Secondly, we must be committed to maintaining global strategic stability, keep advancing the process of nuclear disarmament and reduce the role of nuclear weapons in the national security context. The countries in possession of the largest nuclear arsenals should continue to reduce them drastically through verifiable and irreversible means. Effective measures should be taken to prevent the weaponization of — and an arms race in — outer space and ensure the peaceful use of outer space.

Thirdly, we should adhere to multilateralism, maintain and strengthen the existing mechanisms for international arms control, disarmament and non-proliferation and revitalize traditional multilateral bodies for arms control and disarmament. With globalization developing in depth, all countries are linked together and interdependent in the quest for security. No country can remain aloof or detached. Only by adhering to multilateralism and strengthening the authority, effectiveness and universality of such arms control and non-proliferation treaties as the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons, the Chemical Weapons Convention and the Biological Weapons Convention will it be possible to cope with the myriad challenges and enhance common security.

Fourthly, to address issues related to non-proliferation, it is vital to address their root causes and symptoms in an integrated manner and to pursue dialogue and negotiations as means to solve the related problems and ensure justice and non-proliferation. In international non-proliferation efforts, a balanced approach should be taken in handling the relationship between non-proliferation and the peaceful use of relevant technologies.

China has always worked to maintain and promote the international arms control, disarmament and non-proliferation process. China is ready to work with all other countries to promote multilateral arms control and the non-proliferation process.

Mr. Grauls (Belgium) (*spoke in French*): I would like to convey my gratitude to you, Mr. President, for having organized this thematic debate devoted to an especially sensitive topic, that of the regulation and reduction of armaments as a vector for peace and development. Your presence here today, Sir, gives our debate special significance. Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon recently denounced "the vast resources that are consumed by the endless pursuit of military superiority" and made an urgent appeal for disarmament.

The United Nations Charter gives both the Security Council and the General Assembly a role to play in that regard. The main responsibility for maintaining international peace and security lies with the Security Council, while the particular mission of the General Assembly is to consider the principles for general cooperation in the maintenance of international peace and security, including those regulating disarmament and arms regulation.

We are compelled to note today that the significant efforts that have been made to bolster peace and security have been accompanied not by a decrease but by a worldwide increase in the resources consumed by armaments. Certainly, arms and security forces are the traditional tools for affirming sovereignty and indispensable instruments for establishing and maintaining security at the national and international levels. Certainly, the decision to invest in armed forces is a sovereign decision to be made by each State in the light of its place in the world and its threat perception. Certainly, investments will always be necessary to improve peacekeeping capacities. By actively developing its security and defence policy, the

European Union and, through it, Belgium are seeking to contribute effectively to the maintenance of peace.

However, as we have witnessed a doubling in military expenditures over the past decade, it would be dishonest to attempt to justify preserving excessive military arsenals out of the sole concern of maintaining peace and security. Peace and security are also built using other means, and what the Charter and today's debate seek to remind us of is that the more we invest in those other means, the less we will need to invest in weapons.

We know what those other means are and we are using and developing them. They are bilateral and regional cooperation, the prevention of conflicts, mediation, peacebuilding and economic and social development. All those instruments contribute to increased collective security and thus can only lead to reduced recourse to arms.

Through its involvement, *inter alia*, within the Peacebuilding Commission, Belgium intends to contribute actively to programmes whose ultimate objective is to silence weapons for good. Disarmament and demobilization are in fact a necessary condition for the economic and social reconstruction of areas affected by conflict.

My country believes that a great step forward in disarmament would be taken if common international norms were adopted for the import, export and transfer of conventional weapons, including small arms and light weapons. Indeed, we know that it is difficult to prevent the destabilizing accumulation and chaotic dissemination of such weapons in conflict zones, and that they therefore claim a great many victims, mostly civilians. We therefore welcome the adoption by the First Committee of the General Assembly of a draft resolution, entitled "Towards an arms trade treaty" (A/C.1/63/L.59), defining a series of concrete steps to achieve progress in that field. Belgium's experience in the implementation of criteria adopted at the regional level leads us to fully endorse that approach and to participate actively in it.

An arms trade treaty would enhance human security — a very important concept for Belgium — as it would have a direct impact on the life of every individual, in particular in the most vulnerable strata of the population. Belgium has therefore resolutely committed itself in favour of banning anti-personnel landmines and cluster munitions. In the same spirit, my

country is actively participating in international efforts to put an end to the phenomenon of child soldiers. Belgium is guided in that respect by the same spirit in which it promoted the Convention on the Prohibition of the Development, Production, Stockpiling and Use of Chemical Weapons and on Their Destruction. Chemical weapons were used for the first time at Ypres, Belgium, during the First World War.

Generally speaking, multilateral disarmament and non-proliferation treaties clearly play a key role, be it with respect to conventional weapons or weapons of mass destruction. In that regard, the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons, the Chemical Weapons Convention and the Convention on the Prohibition of the Development, Production and Stockpiling of Bacteriological (Biological) and Toxin Weapons and on their Destruction deserve special mention. Belgium stresses the importance of strict compliance with those instruments, which should be ratified and implemented by all States Members of the United Nations.

Belgium welcomes your initiative, Mr. President, which leads us back to the basic aspirations of the Charter's authors. My country is convinced that it cannot but bolster the resolve of our Council to labour for peace and security with all the means at its disposal, both through armaments and "with the least diversion for armaments of the world's human and economic resources", as clearly prescribed in Article 26 of the Charter. We are convinced that today's debate will serve as a clarion call to enhance the effectiveness of the multilateral framework of our disarmament, arms control and non-proliferation policies.

Mr. Kumalo (South Africa): My delegation joins in welcoming you, Sir, to New York and thanks the delegation of Costa Rica for organizing this debate today. Your presence in New York is a clear demonstration of your commitment to the issues we are discussing today, particularly the maintenance of international peace and security.

We also welcome the Foreign Minister of Panama and thank Mr. Duarte for his briefing.

At the Millennium Summit and the 2005 World Summit, world leaders set out an ambitious plan that could help to eliminate poverty and to achieve development, peace and security for all. The international community did so in the certain knowledge that development is the only certain

pathway to peace and security. Now that we are at the halfway point towards attaining the Millennium Development Goals, we continue to struggle to mobilize the requisite resources, while military expenditure worldwide continues to rise from an already extremely high level.

Today's debate is an important initiative to focus attention on the complex nexus that exists between collective security and development and on the need to regulate and reduce armaments so that scarce resources can be more appropriately directed towards realizing a better life for all.

We recognize the right to security and, in that context, the right to produce, procure and possess arms at a level that does not go beyond that required for the purposes of self-defence. South Africa has a national defence force that is actively involved in peacekeeping operations on the African continent.

Security is one of the most fundamental aspirations of humankind and is a basic human right. The United Nations Charter is premised on the notion of collective security, and the right to self-defence is explicitly set out in Article 51. That is why the Security Council is entrusted with the primary responsibility for the maintenance of international peace and security and has a wide range of powers under the Charter.

However, history has shown that the traditional approach in many parts of the world — that of seeking security through the acquisition of the most advanced weapons and by building up huge armies — has led to numerous conflicts, including two devastating world wars. The advent of nuclear and other highly destructive weapons has brought us to the point where collective security is threatened by the continued existence of the most destructive weapons.

Other principles of the United Nations Charter, specifically the principles of respect for sovereignty, refraining from the threat or use of force, the peaceful settlement of disputes and non-interference in the internal affairs of States, are all threatened when some countries seek a military advantage over the rest. Arms races between competing nations also consume scarce resources that could be better utilized to address the plight of the world's desperately poor and that adversely affect the right of peoples freely to determine their system of social and economic development.

Without infringing on the mandates of other United Nations bodies that work on this broad theme, it is possible, we believe, to point to some specific areas where the Security Council makes a constructive contribution and where it ought to do more. In our view, the Security Council's most profound contribution is to be found in its conflict resolution and prevention work and in the support it provides to existing disarmament, non-proliferation and arms control regimes. Through its good offices, the Security Council can help to promote security sector reform in countries emerging from conflict, including the integration and rationalization of armed forces that will be accountable to that Government and the people.

The Council could do far more — in particular through the example that can be set by its own members — to help cut the flow of weapons to all conflict-afflicted areas, and not just those that are subject to its arms embargoes. South Africa's own national arms control procedures are designed to prevent the sale of South African weapons to areas of conflict. In addition, through full compliance with both their disarmament and their non-proliferation obligations and a non-selective approach, members of the Security Council will restore confidence in the relevant multilateral instruments.

A second Security Council contribution would be more even-handed execution of its primary responsibility of maintaining international peace and security. The current situation, where the Council only acts in some arenas and in defence of the security of certain peoples, does little to contribute to an environment that is supportive of the efforts of States to implement their disarmament, non-proliferation and arms control obligations fully, thereby freeing up resources for development. One only has to look at the situation in Palestine and the wider Middle East region to see the disparities in the Council's actions.

A third contribution from the Security Council is through the achievement of a more effective and efficient collective security system through building on synergies between the United Nations and regional arrangements in terms of Chapter VIII of the United Nations Charter. South Africa has promoted this theme throughout our tenure in the Council, with a particular focus on cooperation between the United Nations and the African Union.

In conclusion, the 2005 World Summit Outcome (General Assembly resolution 60/1) affirms that development, human rights and collective security are the three interlinked and mutually reinforcing pillars that support the multilateral system. Peace and security issues are best addressed multilaterally and in accordance with international law. Moreover, as this important debate reminds us today, collective security and matters of war and peace should not be seen in isolation from the right of peoples to socio-economic development. Decisions on arms procurement and military expenditure affect us all.

Mr. Jurica (Croatia): It is our pleasure Mr. President, to welcome you to the Security Council today. I would like to thank you for your initiative in organizing this open debate on the strengthening of collective security through the general regulation and reduction of armaments. We would also like to welcome the Vice-President and Minister for Foreign Affairs of Panama, Mr. Samuel Lewis-Navarro, to this debate, as well as High Representative of the Secretary-General for Disarmament Affairs, Mr. Sergio Duarte.

Croatia recognizes the primary responsibility and the leading role of the Security Council in the maintenance of international peace and security: the Council is the only global body mandated with that task. In that context we see today's debate as a contribution to the fulfilment of that role. The notion of collective security is, in our opinion, compatible with the lofty duties and responsibilities of the Security Council. Consequently, we believe that it is useful for the Council to discuss issues related to the strengthening of collective security through the general regulation and reduction of armaments.

Similarly, Croatia would also like to stress the important role and activities of the General Assembly as well as other elements of the United Nations machinery in the field of the disarmament. Moreover, one should not overlook ongoing efforts and action at the multilateral, regional, bilateral and national levels on the issue of the strengthening of collective security through disarmament and the reduction of armaments.

Croatia would like to underscore the importance of regional and subregional organizations in matters relating to the improvement of international collective security. As a European country, Croatia especially values the active role and contribution to collective

security of a number of European regional organizations, most notably the European Union, the North Atlantic Treaty Organization and the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe.

The reduction of armaments can contribute to regional and subregional security and stability. A good example of a successful subregional arms control agreement is the adoption and implementation of the relevant provisions of annex I-B of the General Framework Agreement for Peace in Bosnia and Herzegovina of 1995, which contributed to collective security and stability in South-East Europe through the establishment of limitations and ceilings in conventional arms and armaments for the signatory countries to that agreement.

On a regional level, it should be mentioned that the Treaty on Conventional Armed Forces in Europe — the CFE Treaty — has contributed to the security and stability of post-cold-war Europe. It is our hope that the difficulties encountered in confirming the CFE Treaty as adapted in 1999 will soon be overcome, so that the countries of South-East Europe will be given the chance to take part in this pan-European arrangement.

However, it is also very important to note that in some countries throughout the world the reduction of armaments and armies does not necessarily translate or lead to greater stability and security. There is an urgent need in some areas of the world to rebuild armed and police forces in order to deal with a wide spectrum of security challenges. In that context, we would like to note the importance of security sector reform in the process of post-conflict stabilization.

My delegation concurs with the notion that a reduction in military spending and expenditures can, where appropriate, contribute to committing more resources to development and can be important in achieving the Millennium Development Goals, although we believe that this idea should be coupled with the principle of responsible governance and should not negatively affect national or regional security and stability.

In the context of development, we would like to recognize once again that development, peace, security and human rights are interlinked and mutually reinforcing.

As regards the promotion of development through the reduction and prevention of armed violence, we would like to take particular note of the importance of the Geneva Declaration on Armed Violence and Development, which was endorsed by more than 100 countries, including Croatia. In this framework, I would like to draw the Council's attention to a regional meeting that was held in Sarajevo, Bosnia and Herzegovina, only a few days ago, at which the countries of South-Eastern Europe adopted the Sarajevo Declaration on Armed Violence and Development.

Croatia supports international efforts for more effective arms control. We would also like to stress the importance of compliance with agreements already in place, which greatly contributes to collective security and has beneficial effects on confidence between nations in their international relations. In this regard, Croatia would like to stress the utmost importance of upholding the relevant provisions of the Charter as they relate to the legal effect of decisions adopted by the Security Council.

We would also like to reiterate our support for existing international agreements and instruments in the field of non-proliferation, disarmament and arms control, which contribute positively to collective international and regional security and stability. In addition, we would also like to stress our support for the process that was recently launched aimed at the adoption of an arms trade treaty, as well as our support for the opening for signature of the Convention on Cluster Munitions later this year in Oslo.

Let me conclude by expressing once again Croatia's support for this debate and any further efforts aimed at strengthening the existing international system of collective security. Our discussions here today are a step in right direction.

Mr. Ripert (France) (*spoke in French*): It is an honour, Sir, to see you here today to preside over the work of the Council, as President of the Republic of Costa Rica and a Nobel Peace Prize laureate. We hope that this spirit of peace will suffuse our work here today. I would also like to convey my gratitude to Mr. Duarte for having delivered the Secretary-General's message, and to note with thanks the presence of the Vice-President of Panama, who honoured us with his statement.

It is my great privilege to take the floor on behalf of the European Union, Turkey, Croatia, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Albania, Ukraine and the Republic of Moldova align themselves with this statement. A complete version of my statement will be distributed.

The European Union acknowledges the main responsibility of the United Nations in peacekeeping and international security in all its forms. Non-proliferation, disarmament, and arms control represent complex challenges. The Charter of the United Nations grants the General Assembly a substantial scope of powers in this area. At the same time, these challenges by their very essence deal with international peace and security with which the Security Council is entrusted.

The European Union is an exemplary body with respect to stability and in combating these challenges. It exerts a stabilizing influence on its region, and has inspired in many of its neighbours a desire to join it. Its territory is subject to regional arms control arrangements, in the broad sense, which play a pivotal role as a result of geography during the cold war. That is also true of the Treaty on Conventional Forces in Europe (CFE).

This year, the European Union made a series of realistic and concrete disarmament proposals in the General Assembly, which promoted, inter alia, the universal ratification of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT) and the conclusion of its verification regime, as well as the dismantling, as rapidly as possible, of all nuclear testing facilities in transparent and open manner; the immediate start of negotiations without preconditions on a treaty banning the production of fissile material for nuclear weapons, as well as an immediate setting up of a moratorium on the production of such materials; the development by nuclear Powers of confidence-building and transparency measures; additional progress in ongoing discussions between the United States and Russia on the development of a legally binding post-START arrangement, as well as an overall reduction of the global stockpile of nuclear weapons, in accordance with article VI of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT), especially by those States with the largest arsenals; the inclusion of tactical nuclear weapons by States which possess them in the overall processes of arms control and disarmament, with a view to reducing and eliminating them; the

opening of talks on a treaty banning short- and intermediate-range surface-to-surface missiles; universal adherence to and implementation by all of the Hague Code of Conduct.

The European Union also plays an active role against the indiscriminate dissemination of weapons, including through its code of conduct on arms transfers and its unqualified support for a draft arms trade treaty. The European Union is also pursuing a very active policy to counter the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction and backs the United Nations action in this field. The European Union is also a key player in the fields of development and the promotion of human rights.

It is difficult, however, to impose rigid mechanisms to cover all regions of the world. In some regions, military expenditure indicators do not necessarily reflect a country's level of insecurity. Indeed, the United Nations current policies are to build up the military capabilities of regional organizations in certain developing areas. However, regionalization should not weaken universal norms, such as the NPT, the Ottawa Convention on the Prohibition, Use, Stockpiling, Production and Transfer of Antipersonnel Mines and on Their Destruction Ottawa Convention on anti-personnel mines and, of course, the draft Arms Trade Treaty. This perspective also includes non-universal norms, but which cover several areas at once, such as the Treaty on Conventional Armed Forces in Europe. Finally, this view also encompasses bilateral norms which are especially important given security issues, such as the START regime.

The European Union would like to make a number of simple points. We must safeguard the achievements of the arms control agreements, especially those of the CFE Treaty. We must work tirelessly to reduce the bloodshed resulting every year from the illicit trafficking and excessive accumulation of small arms and light weapons. The non-proliferation regime is essential to our security, and given the important deadlines over the next two years, we must do our utmost to strengthen it. We must also make the best possible use of the three remaining years before us to arrive at a strong, binding and universal arms trade treaty. Finally, building upon our own experience, we would like to call for a strengthening of regional solidarity which quite clearly is a factor that bolsters peace and stability throughout the world.

Speaking in my national capacity now, I would like to briefly remind the Council of the unprecedented transparency measures and initiatives announced on 21 March by the President of the French Republic. I am referring here, first and foremost, in the nuclear field, to the visit to our former fissile material production facilities which have now been dismantled which was carried out by representatives of the Disarmament Commission on 16 September. I am referring here to the significant reduction of the configuration of our forces which was announced as well as to an announcement regarding the size of our national arsenal, which was made public on 21 March. Finally, I would add that France, of course, backs the draft presidential statement that has been submitted to us.

Mr. Mubarak (Libyan Arab Jamahiriya) (*spoke in Arabic*): It is an honour indeed, Sir, for us to see you presiding over today's meeting, which is devoted to a debate on an extremely important issue. We welcome you personally, Sir, both as President of Costa Rica and as President of the Security Council. We also welcome the Vice-President and Minister for Foreign Affairs of Panama, Mr. Samuel Lewis-Navarro.

At the outset, my delegation would like to express its gratitude to the delegation of Costa Rica for having organized this important meeting on the maintenance of collective security through general regulation and reduction of armaments, which we believe will contribute to the Security Council's efforts in that regard.

Achieving collective security for all States continues to be the ultimate purpose for which the Security Council was established. Article 24 of the Charter of the United Nations confers upon the Council the primary responsibility for the maintenance of international peace and security and mandates it to act on behalf of all Member States.

Six decades have transpired since the establishment of the Security Council. However, collective security remains an elusive goal for every State. In spite of certain indicators that point to genuine successes and the historic circumstances that have long guided the actions of the Council, it is quite clear that the current international circumstances provide a more appropriate environment than that which prevailed during the decades of the cold war. That more propitious environment should enable the

United Nations to play its rightful role in promoting collective security, disarmament and the regulation of armaments. However, all of us must bear in mind that a more conducive international environment in itself is insufficient to improve the effectiveness of the Council. Among other matters, there is first and foremost a need to improve the Council's legitimacy.

In the 2004 report (see A/59/565) of the Secretary-General entitled "A more secure world: our shared responsibility", which was prepared by his High-level Panel on Threats, Challenges and Change, several terms are used repeatedly, such as: "a threat to one is a threat to all". Paragraph 24 of the report also states that "Every State requires the cooperation of other States to make itself secure". Those concepts are now indisputable and have become mere platitudes.

The regulation of disarmament and arms control can undoubtedly serve to promote collective security for all States, small and large. However, the regulation of armaments should take place in the context of comprehensive and multilateral negotiations in which all States participate. In the era of globalization, where a revolution in information and communication technologies has taken place, the regulation of armaments, disarmament and non-proliferation are indeed of growing importance, for they have an impact on every State in one way or another. Those issues must therefore be addressed through international and multilateral agreements and treaties under the auspices of the United Nations. Multilaterally negotiated and implemented disarmament and arms reduction agreements are the appropriate mechanisms through which States parties can consult and cooperate to find solutions to any problem that may arise with regard to the objectives or implementation of the provisions of those instruments.

International cooperation, in particular between the United Nations and regional and subregional organizations, serves to strengthen collective security. Given their increasing potential, the primary role they play in the area of preventive diplomacy and their capacity to understand the genuine reasons for conflict in a given region — which in turn enables them to contribute to the prevention or resolution of conflicts — such cooperation should be strengthened in line with the provisions of Chapter VIII of the Charter of the United Nations.

My country believes that there is a very close link between disarmament, development and human rights. There can be no development without security and stability, and vice versa. It is therefore clear that disarmament and arms control cannot but have a positive impact on development, security and stability.

A very paradoxical situation exists with regard to global military expenditures and the various aspects of socio-economic underdevelopment — including hunger, poverty and disease — that afflict more than two thirds of humankind. The excessive acquisition of armaments — which, according to United Nations statistics, currently accounts for \$1 trillion in spending annually — consumes a far greater share of human, natural, financial and technological resources than it should. That places a heavy burden on the economies of all States. It also has an impact on trade, financial flows and technology exchange at the global level. The Group of Governmental Experts established pursuant to General Assembly resolution 57/65 to consider that issue at the international level concluded that global military spending, which had begun to decline slightly in the 1990s, began to rise again since 2001. Consequently, defence budgets have grown throughout the world, serving to accentuate a climate of insecurity, fear and mistrust.

The international community has committed itself to devoting part of the resources freed up as a result of the implementation of disarmament and arms reduction agreements to socio-economic development. That should contribute significantly to resolving numerous problems associated with poverty and the spread of disease and, in turn, help to achieve collective security.

In that regard, Mr. President, we believe that your country serves as an example that the world should both welcome and emulate. While you have been fortunate as regards geography, it is quite clear that it has been the will of your people that has led you down this path. We wish to express our gratitude to your delegation for preparing both the concept paper for this meeting and the draft presidential statement before us which we support.

The President (*spoke in Spanish*): I shall now make a statement in my capacity as the representative of Costa Rica.

A curious tale from Scandinavian mythology tells of two kings condemned to fight one another for eternity. If one succeeded in killing the other, the

victim would rise again to continue their struggle until the last day of the world. The story has several versions, but, in all of them, the kings and their armies are revived each morning with new weapons, ready to take to the field of battle once more. This fantasy, product of a warrior culture, became a painful premonition of the events that would mark, with blood, the history of the twentieth century: an escalation of weapons, enemies, threats and war that ended the lives of hundreds of millions of people and forced us into the trenches of international insecurity.

There lies the reason for the creation of this Security Council: in the search for solutions to the endless battle within the human species, fed by the frenzy of the arms race. It is unlikely that any organization has ever been set a more ambitious task than that. And it is unlikely that any organization has faced more difficult choices. Many of those dilemmas remain to be resolved but their answer can be found, without a doubt, in the content of the Charter of the United Nations. In 1945, with the smoke still clearing after the worst war in human memory, the founders of this Organization wrote in Article 26 of the Charter of the United Nations:

“In order to promote the establishment and maintenance of international peace and security with the least diversion for armaments of the world's human and economic resources, the Security Council shall be responsible for formulating, with the assistance of the Military Staff Committee referred to in Article 47, plans to be submitted to the Members of the United Nations for the establishment of a system for the regulation of armaments.”

The wording of that Article is no accident. It makes a statement of which this Council must take note, to the fullest extent of its meaning: spending on arms is a diversion of human and economic resources; that is to say, a use that is not correct. As a minimum, the Charter asks us to accept that excessive military spending exacts an infinite cost in opportunity.

These are not the delusions of a citizen of the first country in history to abolish its army and declare peace on the world. They are not the dreams of a Nobel Peace laureate. This is the text that holds up this building. It is the text that justifies any action of this Security Council. Article 26 has been, until now, a dead letter in the vast cemetery of intentions for world

peace. But in that place there also rests the possibility of reviving that intention; of giving it the meaning intended by those who precede us in this struggle.

"The least diversion of resources" means, first and foremost, finding alternatives to excessive military spending that do not damage security. One of those alternatives is to strengthen multilateralism. As long as nations do not feel protected by strong regional organizations with real powers to act, they will continue to arm themselves at the expense of their peoples' development — of the poorest, in particular — and at the expense of international security. The Security Council must support, as a guarantor of collective security, multilateral accords adopted in our various regional organisms. Costa Rica will work along these lines during the coming year as a way to generate an environment that allows for the gradual reduction of military spending.

Ours is an unarmed nation but it is not a naive nation. We have not come here to lobby for the abolition of all armies. We have not even come to urge the drastic reduction of world military spending, which has now reached \$3.3 billion a day — which is shameful. But a gradual reduction is not only possible, but also imperative, in particular for developing nations.

I am well aware that neither this Organization nor this Council nor any of its Members can decide how much other countries spend on arms and soldiers. But we can decide how much international aid they receive and on which principles such aid is based. With the money that some developing nations spend on a single combat plane, they could buy 200,000 MIT Media Lab computers for students with limited resources. With the money they spend on a single helicopter, they could pay \$100 monthly grants for a whole year to 5,000 students at risk of dropping out of school. The perverse logic that impels a poor nation to spend excessive sums on its armies and not on meeting the needs of its people is exactly the antithesis of human security and is ultimately a serious threat to international security.

That is why my Government has presented the Costa Rica Consensus, an initiative to create mechanisms to forgive debts and support with international financial resources those developing countries which increase spending on environmental protection, education, healthcare and housing for their people and decrease spending on weapons and soldiers.

In other words, this initiative seeks to reward developing countries, whether poor or middle-income, that divert increasingly fewer of their economic and human resources to the purchase of arms, just as stipulated in Article 26 of the Charter of the United Nations. Today, I ask members for their support in making the Consensus of Costa Rica a reality.

I also ask members for their support for the arms trade treaty that Costa Rica, along with other nations, presented to the United Nations in 2006. This treaty seeks to prohibit the sale of arms to States, groups or individuals, when there is sufficient reason to believe that they will be used to violate human rights or international law. I do not know how much longer we can survive unless we realize that it is just as terrible to kill many people, little by little, every day, as it is to kill many people in a single day. The destructive power of the 640 million small arms and light weapons that exist in the world, 74 per cent of which are in the hands of civilians, has proven to be more lethal than that of nuclear weapons and constitutes one of the principal motors of national and international insecurity.

Costa Rica knows that the members of this Council include some of the countries that top the list for the sale and purchase of small arms and light weapons in the world. But my country also knows that those nations have recognized terrorism and drug trafficking as serious threats to international security. International organized crime depends on arms trafficking, which until now has flowed with terrifying freedom across our borders, with the result that these same powerful nations suffer the consequences. Although the treaty would not eliminate the existence of such criminal groups, it would certainly limit their operations.

If we do not succeed with these measures, if the Costa Rica Consensus does not win the support of developed nations and if the arms trade treaty sinks in the waters of this organization, our pursuit of the Millennium Development Goals will become nothing more than the impossible dream of a world that, like Sisyphus, labours without rest towards an unattainable goal.

We are working to eradicate extreme poverty and hunger and, yet, armed conflicts constitute the principal cause of hunger in our world. We are working to improve health care, particularly maternal health and

the fight against AIDS and malaria. Yet, military spending drains millions of dollars from the health-care budgets of poor countries. The Millennium Development Goals were brave words, but they will never be more than words if we do not regulate arms or devise incentives to reduce global military spending.

Humanity can break the chain that, until now, has forced us to spend our centuries in an incessant and fratricidal struggle. That was the belief of those who founded this Organization. The enormous mission entrusted to this Council is not a failed expectation, but it is a rocky path. Maintaining peace will never be a simple task, nor will it ever be completed. But, I assure you that strengthening multilateralism, reducing military spending in favour of human development and regulating the international arms trade are steps in the right direction, the same as that marked out 63 years ago by those who, having survived atrocities, were nonetheless able to hope.

I resume my function as President of the Council.

I now give the floor to His Excellency Renan Fuentealba, Special Envoy of the President of Chile and Chairman of the Foreign Affairs Committee of the Chamber of Deputies.

Mr. Fuentealba (Chile) (*spoke in Spanish*): First of all, Sir, let me thank you for having taken the initiative to convene this special Security Council debate on strengthening collective security mechanisms. I have the honour to greet you warmly on behalf of Her Excellency the President of Chile, Mrs. Michelle Bachelet Jeria.

At this meeting, we would like to add our country's voice to the consideration of a central topic for this Organization and the international community. In accordance with the preamble and Article 1 of the Charter, which defines the Organization's purposes, the United Nations was created, above all, as an instrument of collective security, designed to save succeeding generations from the scourge of war.

We must recognize that, in the face of an international context different from that which the signatories of the Charter were witnessing in 1945, it is essential to adapt our Organization to the requirements of an international security that involves new threats, while the traditional ones have not disappeared.

However, the process of reform of the United Nations, launched with the adoption by consensus of

the 2005 World Summit Outcome (resolution 60/1), is pursuing a somewhat leisurely pace after some concrete achievements, such as the establishment of the Human Rights Council and the Peacebuilding Commission.

Chile has consistently advocated far-reaching reform of the United Nations that would enhance its credibility and legitimacy by reaffirming the principles and values of the Charter. We have already taken significant steps in that direction, but we must not neglect the challenge of reforming the Security Council, which is the centrepiece in the global process of the Organization's necessary reform. The present composition of the Security Council does not reflect the international reality of the twenty-first century. Clearly, the organ responsible for ensuring international peace and security must be more representative — possibly expanding its membership — and have more transparent and participatory working methods.

At a time when the bloodiest conflicts occur in intra-State scenarios but have a big impact on the surrounding neighbours, regional mechanisms must also be strengthened, so that they can play a preventive role, which is indispensable in every regard. In Latin America and the Caribbean, we have made progress that should be studied in other latitudes. We established the first nuclear-weapon-free zone in a densely populated region of the world. Under the 1991 Mendoza Commitment, we became a region free of biological and chemical weapons. In 2002, we established the South American Zone of Peace and Cooperation and today, in the framework of the Union of South American Nations, we are discussing a subregional defence initiative, based on confidence and cooperation. All those achievements can perfectly well be extrapolated to other regions, needing only political will to realize them.

The Charter of the United Nations restricts the legitimate use of force, through legitimate means of defence, to collective action to repel aggression and the exercise of the inherent right of individual or collective self-defence. For its part, the Final Document of the 1978 first special session of the General Assembly devoted to disarmament called for the balanced reduction of conventional armaments, based on the principle of undiminished security of the parties with a view to promoting or enhancing stability at a lower military level.

Chile believes that it is essential to ensure transparency in the acquisition of legitimate means of defence. Such means are not only authorized by the Charter, but also derive from the principle of undiminished security for all States at the lowest possible level of armaments, as proclaimed in the above-mentioned Final Document. Transparency is, in turn, an essential prerequisite for mutual trust, which must lie at the very foundation of any action designed to consolidate international security.

In that regard, our region took a decisive step with the Inter-American Convention on Transparency in Conventional Weapons Acquisitions, which gives legal force to the standards previously established by the United Nations Register of Conventional Arms.

Yet, beyond the provisions of that Convention and with special emphasis as of 1990, Chile has pursued an open, prudent and sustainable policy to equip an essentially defensive military force. National defence policies have been debated intensely and democratically in our country and then universally disseminated in the National Defence Book, of which two editions have been published and a third is in preparation. Chilean military purchases, of which our neighbours were duly forewarned, sought to maintain the operational level of an armed force whose troop strength has been reduced in light of the national and regional situation, but which need to remain technically up to date to perform their constitutionally assigned tasks and participate effectively in peacekeeping operations. Indeed, Chile is currently involved in Haiti, Cyprus and Bosnia and Herzegovina. As a result of those policies, it has been possible to keep total defence spending at only 1.09 per cent of the gross domestic product and 6.36 per cent of government spending. Those percentages include all operating expenses of our armed forces.

My country has made mutual confidence-building one of the central elements of its foreign policy towards its neighbours and the region. Thus, we have created ongoing bilateral consultation mechanisms with Argentina and Peru, in both cases spearheaded by meetings of Ministers for Foreign Relations and Ministers of Defence, known as the 2-plus-2 meetings. On the substantive front, we have agreed with Argentina, with valuable assistance from the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean, on a standardized methodology between the two countries for measuring military spending that introduces

certainty and confidence as a sensitive aspect of our bilateral relationship. Moreover, building on the agreements on military assistance in natural disasters and those on the holding of joint exercises, we have progressed towards establishing the Southern Cross joint military force, which we have made available to the United Nations for deployment as of 2010.

In addition, observing that some of the regional security instruments and mechanisms are inadequate to meet current situations, Chile has established a network of bilateral defence cooperation agreements with various countries in our hemisphere and the rest of the world.

The international situation could shortly generate new opportunities for relaunching the multilateral disarmament agenda. The United States President-elect has made a promise to seek ratification of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty, which, if kept, would be a positive development in the sad path followed over the past ten years by the forums of our disarmament machinery. That ratification would undoubtedly send a strong political signal that could influence the eighth Review Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons, in 2010.

We cannot allow ourselves another failure in the most important forum in the nuclear non-proliferation regime. Moreover, in response to voices of authority that have been raised recently both in this country and around the world, negotiations should be resumed to move towards gradual nuclear disarmament based on a reduction in the operational status of the remaining nuclear weapons.

Thirty years after the first special session of the General Assembly devoted to disarmament, and twenty years after the most recent special session, Chile is convinced of the need to convene a fourth special session, at the highest political level, to conduct a far-reaching and forward-looking review of the goals and in particular, the multilateral forums and instruments in the fields of disarmament and international security. We are delighted that the First Committee of the General Assembly adopted by consensus draft decision A/C.1/63/L.22 on the subject a few days ago. As the principal representative organ of the United Nations, the General Assembly is called upon to negotiate the terms of a new road map.

Those are the principal challenges faced by the Organization on the issue of security. Chile is strongly committed to the work being done by the United Nations and is absolutely convinced that we bear the huge responsibility of bequeathing to future generations a world of peace and security.

The President (*spoke in Spanish*): I give the floor to the representative of Mexico.

Mr. Heller (Mexico) (*spoke in Spanish*): Mexico would like to express its thanks to you, Sir, as President of Costa Rica, for the initiatives of your Government and for convening this important debate on an issue of such importance for maintaining international peace and security. We welcome your presence, as well as that of the Vice-President of Panama and the High Representative for Disarmament Affairs.

Mexico believes that strengthening collective security is closely related to conflict prevention. In view of the continuing increase in violence associated with conflicts around the world, it is necessary to promote the active participation of the international community, both through the search for solutions that will lead to greater security, and through the regulation and reduction of armaments and the promotion of development, especially at a time of serious crises in terms of food, energy and finance, whose consequences we cannot yet fully comprehend.

At the 2005 World Summit, the heads of State and Government recognized the link that exists between development, peace and security and human rights. In that context, Mexico has sought to promote and support various initiatives associated with those concepts, such as the establishment of the Peacebuilding Commission, which is an institutional link between security and development. My country has worked actively on the Geneva Declaration on Armed Violence and Development and the regional Declaration of Guatemala, which drew attention to the extremely negative effects of insecurity and armed violence on development.

Mexico shares the view of Costa Rica that reduction in and regulation of armaments around the world would significantly contribute to strengthening international peace and security. The international community needs to promote initiatives on disarmament, non-proliferation and arms control in the

context of working on the conflicts being dealt with by the Security Council.

For more than sixty years, Mexico has stated that the total elimination of nuclear weapons is the only rational path to guaranteeing collective security. All States that have nuclear arms and technology for non-peaceful ends should carry out systematic and transparent weapons-reduction actions, which would be effective means to increase confidence and promote the elimination of deterrence doctrine. States should comply equally and with the same conviction with their obligations on disarmament and non-proliferation, because those are two sides of the same coin and are definitely, politically and legally interdependent.

The same criteria should be applied to other weapons of mass destruction, such as chemical and biological weapons. Strengthening the framework of the various legal instruments of the disarmament regime and the Review Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons in 2010 are essential priorities.

Mexico is concerned that the deployment of conventional arms is an emerging threat to international peace and security, to development and even to the survival and well-being of some States. It has been seen, and must be recognized, that the great majority of arms on the black market today belonged at some point to the legal arms trade.

Mexico is a country seriously affected by the illicit trade in small arms and light weapons and we attach the greatest priority to finding a solution for that problem, which is also linked to organized crime. We repeat that it is an issue that can only be solved through international cooperation and agreement based on the principle of shared responsibility, which requires the active participation of both governmental and non-governmental actors. All States, as well as manufacturers, exporters, arms brokers, non-governmental organizations and, obviously, the appropriate intergovernmental organizations, need to intensify their efforts to achieve the objectives of the Programme of Action on Small Arms.

The full implementation of the United Nations Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects and the Protocol against the Illicit Manufacturing of and Trafficking in Firearms, Their Parts and Components and Ammunition, and the

regional conventions on the illicit trade in arms are necessary tools to avoid the destabilization caused by the arms trade. In that context, those instruments are a significant contribution to the maintenance of international peace and security.

In view of those elements, Mexico supported the initiative initially presented by Costa Rica in the First Committee to establish the feasibility of negotiating a treaty on arms trade. Mexico believes that a future arms trade treaty should establish arms trade criteria that are objective, non-discriminatory and in accordance with international law.

Mexico believes that a strong legal framework to combat the illicit trade in arms, together with effective controls on trade and the important work of the Security Council on arms embargoes in cases of armed conflict, are essential in order to guarantee international peace and security.

I also wish to announce that Mexico will sign, in Oslo in December 2008, the Convention on Cluster Munitions that was recently negotiated.

I will conclude by noting that Mexico, as a non-permanent member of the Security Council from 2009-2010 hopes to contribute decisively with a multidimensional security approach to the various conflicts around the world and will work to strengthen collective security based on international cooperation.

The President (*spoke in Spanish*): I now call on the representative of Brazil.

Mrs. Vioti (Brazil) (*spoke in Spanish*): Permit me to thank you, President Arias, for the initiative of convening this meeting. Costa Rica's commitment to peace and disarmament is well known; your presence among us is an honour and highlights the importance of this debate. I should also like to recognize the participation of His Excellency Mr. Samuel Lewis-Navarro, Vice-President and Minister for Foreign Affairs of Panama, and to thank Ambassador Sergio Duarte, High Representative for Disarmament Affairs, for his presentation.

(*spoke in English*)

Collective security is a comprehensive concept that should include the consideration of initiatives geared towards conflict prevention and peacebuilding. Furthermore, the positive effects of development on peace and security should not be forgotten.

The collective security framework established in the Charter has yet to be fully implemented. Insufficient progress has been made regarding arms regulation, which includes arms control, arms transparency, non-proliferation and disarmament. A system of collective security must also ensure that breaches are promptly corrected. That entails the commitment and availability of resources under multilateral controls to create a credible deterrent.

The collective security framework of the United Nations was designed before the existence of nuclear weapons was widely known and before the further development of their means of delivery. Early on, the challenges posed by such weapons were a cause for concern among United Nations Members.

The early efforts in the Security Council to formulate plans on a system for the regulation of armaments were thwarted by the beginning of the cold war. It was up to the General Assembly, in the light of the mandate set out in Article 11 of the Charter, to continue the consideration of the issue. Thirty years ago, the General Assembly held its first special session on disarmament, during which the current disarmament machinery was established. Although some progress has been achieved, the goal of general and complete disarmament remains elusive.

It is a cause for concern that decades have gone by and nuclear disarmament has not been realized. That is compounded by other factors, such as the persistence of nuclear doctrines that admit first use; the lack of binding negative security assurances; the ongoing research on nuclear explosives, including subcritical tests; and maintaining readiness to resume full-scale testing. Other worrisome developments are new alleged justifications for retaining nuclear arsenals. No matter how carefully crafted, these appear to be increasingly inadequate in the face of the current international situation. On the one hand, it is evident that nuclear weapons are not a deterrent to new threats from non-State actors; on the other, holding on to nuclear arsenals only seems to encourage others to go down the same path. The cost of stalling on nuclear disarmament, in terms of non-proliferation, is all too clear.

Brazil believes that the issue of strengthening the collective security framework of the United Nations merits our best efforts. In that context, the regulation of armaments will play a substantial role. We remain committed to the endeavour of providing the

Organization with an adequate framework for effectively addressing challenges to peace and security.

The President (*spoke in Spanish*): I now call on the representative of Norway.

Mrs. Juul (Norway): Let me start by thanking you, Mr. President, for this important meeting and for the opportunity that it provides for all United Nations Members to discuss essential disarmament and non-proliferation issues. The spread of weapons of mass destruction and the illegal proliferation of conventional weapons constitute a serious threat to international peace and security.

The protection of peace and security is the core of the mandate of the Security Council, and the Council has an important role to play in supporting international arms control through determined action. Norway fully supports the resolutions adopted by the Council regarding specific proliferations concerns. Norway welcomed the adoption of resolution 1540 (2004) and has provided funds to the United Nations Office for Disarmament Affairs for the promotion of that resolution at the regional level. But we must also recognize that global norms will have to be negotiated in relevant — and broader — multilateral bodies. It has been a firm Norwegian policy that multilateral arms control negotiations should be open to all United Nations Member States.

Regrettably, the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) is under growing strain. Equally regrettable are the unfulfilled expectations in the field of nuclear disarmament. While we applaud the significant reductions in nuclear arsenals that have taken place, we call for significantly deeper reductions on the basis of irreversibility, verification and transparency.

We are also increasingly impatient at the lack of progress in multilateral efforts to prevent a possible new arms race. We regret that the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT) has not entered into force, and it is deplorable that it has so far been impossible to negotiate a treaty banning the production of fissile materials for weapons purposes. It is imperative that we make progress in that field in the coming year.

An erosion of the NPT would be a serious setback for multilateral non-proliferation efforts. Such an erosion would make a world free of nuclear weapons

much more difficult to achieve. It is vital that all States parties to the NPT do their utmost to contribute to a successful outcome. Norway is seeking to contribute to that end in various ways, including the cross-regional Seven-Nation Initiative.

It is encouraging to note the renewed interest in achieving the full elimination of nuclear weapons. There is a growing consensus that the existence of tens of thousands of nuclear arms does not enhance our security. Nuclear disarmament is an integral part of our common non-proliferation efforts.

In February this year, Norway hosted an international conference on nuclear issues, attended by some of the leading experts from around the globe. A key message from the conference was the importance of the CTBT. A legally binding Test-Ban Treaty is crucial. We need new and deeper cuts beyond those provided for in existing arms control treaties. We need to explore ways to reduce the importance of nuclear arms in security policies, such as regional nuclear-weapon-free zones. We need to lower the operational status of nuclear weapons that are deployed. All political leaders and relevant stakeholders must be engaged. We must forge new alliances and work across traditional political and geographical dividing lines.

My Government is pleased to note that important results have been achieved in the field of eliminating categories of conventional weapons that cause unacceptable humanitarian harm. We applaud the landmark decision that was reached in Dublin on 30 May this year, when 107 States adopted the text of the Convention on Cluster Munitions. The new Convention prohibits all use, stockpiling, production and transfer of cluster munitions. It also deals with assistance to victims, the clearance of contaminated areas and the destruction of stockpiles.

The Convention is the outcome of the Oslo process, an open process that was launched in 2006 and that included States, civil society, the International Committee of the Red Cross and the United Nations. We have achieved a result that represents a significant strengthening of international humanitarian law. The Convention on Cluster Munitions will be opened for signature in Oslo on 3 December. All United Nations Member States have been invited to the Convention on Cluster Munitions Signing Conference.

Norway is convinced that the lessons learned from a humanitarian disarmament approach can be applied in

other areas, such as regulating the international trade in conventional weapons. My Government reaffirms its support for negotiations on a forward-looking arms trade treaty. We look forward to participating in the upcoming process in that regard with a view to achieving a legally binding treaty regulating the trade in such weapons as well as their munitions.

The President (*spoke in Spanish*): There are a number of speakers remaining on my list for this meeting. In view of the lateness of the hour, I intend, with the concurrence of members of the Council, to suspend the meeting until 3 p.m.

The meeting was suspended at 12.50 p.m.



Security Council

Sixty-third year

Provisional

6017th meeting

Wednesday, 19 November 2008, 3 p.m.
New York

<i>President:</i>	Mr. Urbina	(Costa Rica)
<i>Members:</i>	Belgium	Mr. Cartuyvels
	Burkina Faso	Mr. Somdah
	China	Mr. Pan Jingyu
	Croatia	Mr. Mutavdžić
	France	Mr. Veyssière
	Indonesia	Mr. Kleib
	Italy	Mr. Riccardo
	Libyan Arab Jamahiriya	Mr. Dabbashi
	Panama	Mr. Arias
	Russian Federation	Mr. Safronkov
	South Africa	Mr. Paschalis
	United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland	Mr. Shepherd
	United States of America	Ms. Schedlbauer
	Viet Nam	Mr. Dang Hoang Giang

Agenda

Maintenance of international peace and security

Strengthening collective security through general regulation and reduction of armaments

Letter dated 10 November 2008 from the Permanent Representative of Costa Rica to the United Nations addressed to the President of the Security Council (S/2008/697)

This record contains the text of speeches delivered in English and of the interpretation of speeches delivered in the other languages. The final text will be printed in the *Official Records of the Security Council*. Corrections should be submitted to the original languages only. They should be incorporated in a copy of the record and sent under the signature of a member of the delegation concerned to the Chief of the Verbatim Reporting Service, room C-154A.



The meeting resumed at 3.10 p.m.

The President (*spoke in Spanish*): I would like to inform the Council that I have received letters from the representatives of Algeria and Benin, in which they request to be invited to participate in the consideration of item on the Council's agenda. In conformity with the usual practice, I propose, with the consent of the Council, to invite those representatives to participate in the consideration of the item, without the right to vote, in accordance with the relevant provisions of the Charter and rule 37 of the Council's provisional rules of procedure.

There being no objection, it is so decided.

At the invitation of the President, the representatives of the aforementioned countries took the seats reserved for them at the side of the Council Chamber.

The President (*spoke in Spanish*): I wish to remind all speakers, as was indicated at this morning's session, to limit their statements to no more than five minutes in order to enable the Council to carry out its work expeditiously. Delegations with lengthy statements are kindly requested to circulate the text in writing and to deliver a condensed version when speaking in the Chamber.

I now give the floor to the representative of Nigeria.

Mrs. Ogwu (Nigeria): Nigeria commends Costa Rica's initiative in organizing this high-level debate on strengthening collective security through general regulation and reduction of armaments. We are delighted that His Excellency Mr. Óscar Arias Sánchez, the President of Costa Rica, personally presided this morning over this very important Security Council debate. We are also grateful for the incisive concept paper prepared by the Council presidency and appreciate the illuminating statement of Mr. Sergio Duarte, the High Representative for Disarmament Affairs.

The concept of collective security, as contained in the United Nations Charter, was designed not only to deter aggression, but also to offer a sense of security to all nations, regardless of size or resources. However, 62 years later, both the promise and hope for collective security have not been fully realized. While States have espoused support for collective security, they have in

the same vein demonstrated considerable reluctance to pursue common global security policies. Consequently, we have continuously encountered scourges of civil strife, inter-State and intra-State conflicts, particularly on the African continent. A common characteristic of these conflicts is the tangled nexus between conflicts and the proliferation of small arms and light weapons.

In spite of these daunting challenges, the Nigerian delegation is persuaded that the United Nations remains the best platform for collective security. Our inextricable interdependence makes it imperative for States to act in concert to ensure that international peace is preserved. We recognize, however, that the collective security system to which we all aspire must realistically take into account new threats and challenges. Transboundary threats, such as human trafficking, drug trafficking, genocide, human rights violations, terrorism, and the proliferation of small arms and light weapons and, indeed, activities of international criminal syndicates, defy geographical boundaries. They are dispersed, insidious and diffused, and require collective action to tackle them.

Nigeria believes that a successful collective security system must rest on committed and genuine partnership between nation States and Member States. It is only through such a commitment that we can translate the dividends of collective security into a tangible tool of conflict prevention. Indeed, Nigeria believes that we can enhance collective security through an effective armaments regulation policy.

On the African continent, illicit trade and the proliferation of small arms and light weapons continue to fuel new conflicts and render the old ones intractable. It is also strengthening non-State actors and reinforcing criminal networks. Hence, we consider small arms and light weapons to be the biggest threat to the consolidation of peace and development. Indeed, their lethality and ready deployment make small arms and light weapons Africa's weapons of mass destruction. In some conflict zones in Africa, particularly in the West African subregion, guns are more readily accessible than food. Such a numbing reality must compel us to be unflinching in our concerted efforts to restore peace and security in war-torn sections of Africa.

Indeed, it was this situation that propelled the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) into establishing a moratorium in October

1998 on the import, export and manufacture of small arms and light weapons. Nigeria reaffirms its commitment to the United Nations Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects. We note with regret, however, that despite efforts at various levels, the illicit circulation of small arms has continued, and their devastating effects on African States in particular seem to negate the political will that we all exhibited at the time of the Programme's adoption in 2001.

Nigeria is convinced that the most effective strategy for preventing, combating and eradicating the illicit small arms trade is through the elaboration of a legally binding global instrument and the collective political will to stem the uncontrolled proliferation of small arms. We therefore call on Member States to demonstrate the necessary political will to establish international standards for the import, export and transfer of conventional arms. We unequivocally support a legally binding arms trade treaty, not only as a tool for establishing a common, international standard on the global arms trade, but also as a means of regulating the accessibility of illicit small arms and light weapons to non-State actors.

Beyond regulating small arms and light weapons proliferation, Nigeria believes that an effective United Nations collective security system requires the strengthening of regional security mechanisms, in consonance with Chapter VIII of the United Nations Charter, which encourages regional organizations to deal with conflicts in their regions. The African Union's evolving Peace and Security Architecture and other subregional security initiatives, including the ECOWAS conflict resolution Mechanism, are designed to rid the continent of conflicts and their debilitating consequences.

We therefore join the quest for a new culture of conflict prevention since it is evident that, in practice, it costs less to prevent than to control conflicts.

The President (*spoke in Spanish*): I now give the floor to the representative of Ecuador.

Ms. Espinosa (Ecuador) (*spoke in Spanish*): Allow me to begin by saying that Ecuador felt very honoured by the presence of the President of Costa Rica, who led the Council's discussion this morning. We would also like to welcome His Excellency

Mr. Samuel Lewis-Navarro, Minister for Foreign Affairs of Panama.

My delegation would also like to thank you, Mr. President, for the excellent initiative of organizing an open debate on such an important topic for our States, and we believe that this is a very crucial step for the establishment of true interaction, a real dialogue, between the Security Council and all the States Members of the Organization. My delegation is convinced that the fight of the international community to strengthen collective security must deal with the underlying causes as well as the origin of the vast majority of conflicts, these being extreme poverty and the unequal distribution of resources, employment and power.

Police, military nor intelligence measures are not enough to eradicate these serious problems. What we need is to introduce a radical change in the structures of the current international order. In recent times, we have witnessed various areas of insecurity and violence around the world. Given this state of affairs, there has been criticism by public opinion against what they have observed as the inability of the United Nations to prevent conflicts, to restore peace and to prevent the loss of innocent civilian lives.

Nevertheless, the United Nations is what its members make of it. This global Organization is not a super-State with coercive prerogatives over its members. This is why we can only reiterate the crucial responsibility that the Security Council has, in accordance with Article 24 of the Charter, as well as the Council's necessary interaction with the General Assembly, in accordance with Article 26 of the same instrument.

My delegation believes it essential that the Security Council establish a relationship with the General Assembly, which is the most democratic and representative organ, in order to strengthen the multilateral system as the sole effective way to establish peace and build development.

Ecuador, resolute in its commitment to disarmament and the non-proliferation of weapons of mass destruction, not only has joined the various international instruments adopted in this area, but also supports and implements all the actions that emanate from those instruments, in order to achieve their real implementation.

Given the transnational effects of drug trafficking, the illicit arms trafficking, organized crime and terrorism, Ecuador is part of regional and international organizations and conventions to combat these scourges. In the area of the maintenance of international peace and security, Ecuador actively participates in peacekeeping operations and humanitarian assistance.

The challenge of small arms and light weapons is above all due to the uncontrolled proliferation of the trade in these weapons. The ease of acquiring them has been a decisive factor in the increase in domestic and international conflicts and the escalation in violence and social disintegration that threatens many countries, in particular the most vulnerable sectors of civilian populations, especially women and children.

Along the same lines, my delegation would like to reiterate its willingness to continue work on developing an arms trade treaty that would make it possible to strengthen the commitment of all countries with respect to international peace and security. Likewise, my country has recently hosted a regional meeting on cluster munitions. In this respect, we have stressed the importance of ratifying that international instrument.

A decade has passed since Ecuador and Peru signed the Brasilia peace agreements, through which the border area was transformed from a conflict zone into an area of peace, work and cooperation. The humanitarian mine-clearance programme became a successful mechanism to strengthen mutual trust and security between our countries. Similarly, given the impact of the domestic Colombian conflict on Ecuadorian society, the efforts of Plan Ecuador are based on a preventive, multidimensional and multisectoral approach. The implementation of that approach is based on achieving national social and economic development goals, strict compliance with international commitments on human rights, the conservation and sustainable use of natural resources and the fight against any type of illicit activity that would affect civil security.

For Ecuador, the topic of collective security is fundamental, and we see it above all as a State policy that guarantees the right to well-being and dignity for human beings, the promotion of collective interests over private interests, intercultural exchange, social

inclusion and the fight against all forms of discrimination.

That is why we think it is paradoxical that, although some countries, such as Ecuador, are deeply committed to disarmament as an instrument of development, in many other cases there has been no abatement in military spending by other States. In the current context of the energy, food and climate crises, we must have a serious discussion on the priorities of our public spending and our investments. Once the cold war was over, we believed — too optimistically — that we had achieved the conditions necessary to restore peace and security through confidence-building measures. Article 51 of the United Nations Charter is therefore the only means for some States to safeguard their security when the Security Council fails to take timely, effective and impartial action to restore peace and security in the world.

We live in a global and interconnected world, and as a result, threats to peace and security require that we strengthen multilateralism, as the President of Costa Rica rightly pointed out this morning. For this reason, my delegation sincerely hopes that the ideas expressed in this debate will be followed up appropriately and translated into concrete action, accompanied by continuous reflection and review and contributing to the greater effectiveness, transparency and legitimacy of this very important body.

The President (*spoke in Spanish*): I now give the floor to the Permanent Representative of Australia.

Mr. Hill (Australia): The Australian Government is committed to strengthening international peace and security. Multilateral organizations, and in particular the United Nations and its Security Council, play a vital role in this regard. We welcome the Costa Rican initiative to sponsor this open debate of the Council on collective security and armament regulation, an important element of the Security Council's work.

Given the time constraints, I want to focus this afternoon on the armaments regulation issue. We have made progress in that regard over the past 60 years. We have seen significant achievements, including the conclusion of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT), conventions on biological and chemical weapons, five protocols to the Convention on Certain Conventional Weapons, the universalization of the Geneva Conventions and the

emergence of a number of regional security agreements. However, more must be done.

The international community now stands at a crossroads. We cannot accept anything other than a successful outcome from the 2010 NPT Review Conference, not only in order to ensure progress on the non-proliferation — both horizontal and vertical — of weapons of mass destruction, but for regional and global security more broadly. The Review Conference offers us an opportunity to re-energize the non-proliferation and disarmament regimes for the greater security of all. That opportunity cannot be lost.

As members of the Council will be aware, Australia and Japan have joined together to establish the International Commission on Nuclear Non-proliferation and Disarmament. The Commission promises a fresh and imaginative vision. It is aimed at helping to change the formulaic and unproductive nature of much of the current nuclear debate. The Commission seeks to help shape a global consensus in the lead-up to 2010 and beyond. Commissioners from a broad range of countries, including members of this Council, will work towards that goal. We encourage all States to support the work of the Commission and to draw on the formidable expertise of its membership in our cooperative efforts on non-proliferation, peaceful use and nuclear disarmament.

We cannot discuss progress on nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation without acknowledging the need for conventional armament regulation. Australia hopes that the encouraging steps we have seen in the area of conventional weapons in recent years can continue. While we see many potential opportunities for further global action, we particularly urge States to continue the momentum, recently demonstrated by the resounding majority of member States in this year's First Committee, to work towards an arms trade treaty.

A legally binding, multilateral arms trade treaty would bring much-needed transparency and accountability, codify existing best practice in the responsible transfer of conventional weapons, and prevent human rights abuses and the destabilizing accumulation of arms.

The President (*spoke in Spanish*): I now give the floor to the Permanent Representative of Switzerland.

Mr. Maurer (Switzerland) (*spoke in French*): Switzerland welcomes your initiative, Mr. President, to organize this high-level meeting. I would like to thank you for the concept paper that was distributed in order to prepare for this thematic debate. We agree with the statement that the concrete situations with which the Security Council is today confronted in many crises underline the need for it to review its role and to reflect on the best way of implementing Article 26 of the Charter. I would like to briefly raise five points.

First, my country considers it essential that the main organs of the United Nations respect their specific areas of competence. The legislative role that requires the greatest possible transparency is clearly that of the General Assembly. The Swiss positions on the main disarmament and non-proliferation issues relating to conventional weapons and weapons of mass destruction are well known and I will not repeat them here. The Security Council, for its part, focuses its attention more on specific conflicts, intervening in the event of a crisis. It is therefore its duty to consider new security policy challenges and to make use of the lessons learned.

Secondly, Switzerland believes that specific projects and concrete programmes, the supervision of illicit arms trafficking in the context of peacekeeping operations, the monitoring of regional agreements and fact-finding missions on the illicit trafficking of arms can be crucial tools in reinforcing the close link between disarmament, development and peace. On the basis of these experiences, we believe it useful for the Security Council to present proposals to parties to conflicts and to make disarmament a key subject in peace negotiations.

Thirdly, allow me to mention the linkage between socio-economic development and armed violence. Launched in 2006, the Geneva Declaration on Armed Violence and Development is based on the premise that armed violence is a serious obstacle to development and may impede the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals. Conversely, armed violence can be reduced by the effects of economic and social development. The importance of the Geneva Declaration was recognized in the report of the Secretary-General on small arms (S/2008/258), issued in April at the request of the Security Council.

In the framework of the implementation of the Geneva Declaration, a number of voluntary pilot

countries were identified with a view to drawing up and implementing policies and programmes to reduce armed violence. My country suggests that the Security Council should use a similar methodology. The innovative aspect of this approach is that it takes a comprehensive view of armed violence and thus considers violence generated in conflict and post-conflict situations, as well as in cases of terrorism and of crime. Indeed, if we examine the list of conflicts of which the Council is seized, we are often confronted with layers of different forms of violence that call for a determined and more systematic action by the Security Council. In this respect, Burundi and Haiti, to take only two examples, illustrate the complex relations that exist between armed violence and economic development. The projects initiated in these two countries in the framework of the Geneva Declaration could also give impetus to United Nations action in the area of peacekeeping.

Fourthly, Switzerland would also like to note that reduction and regulation of armaments are not the only way forward in this area. Security sector reform and the demobilization, demilitarization and reintegration of former combatants can also contribute to this effort and reduce tension. The links between the two themes, which have been discussed by the Security Council, and their practical implementation need to be looked at as a whole.

Fifthly, and finally, I would like to emphasize that my country endorses the basic idea in the concept paper, which stresses the importance of regional arms control and disarmament measures. However, Switzerland also believes that it is essential to bear in mind the specific nature of each region in exercises of this kind and to create a sense of ownership by the main actors.

The President (spoke in Spanish): I now give the floor to the representative of Argentina.

Mr. Argüello (Argentina) (spoke in Spanish): I would like to begin by joining previous speakers in thanking the Republic of Costa Rica and its President, Mr. Óscar Arias Sánchez, for having organized this open debate on maintenance of international peace and security: strengthening collective security through general regulation and reduction of armaments. We certainly believe that this is a timely initiative because of the fact that many of the issues under discussion are very topical.

Allow me to recall the clear and committed policy of Argentina with respect to disarmament and non-proliferation, which aims at achieving a multilateral consensus to secure international peace and security.

The concept paper presented by Costa Rica for this meeting (S/2008/697, annex) properly stresses Articles 24 and 26 of the Charter of the United Nations, in particular with respect to the Military Staff Committee, which should have assisted the Security Council in the formulation of plans to be submitted to the Members of the United Nations for the establishment of a system for the regulation of armaments. However, for the use and command of the forces placed at the disposal of the United Nations, the Organization had to establish different arrangements throughout its history to overcome the impossibility that the Military Staff Committee could fulfil its mandate. The current structure of United Nations peacekeeping operations arose from the need to perform some of those functions foreseen in the Charter.

With respect to disarmament and the regulation of armaments, the usual United Nations bodies, as well as the Conference on Disarmament and many other arrangements, provide forums to discuss and negotiate these issues. Unfortunately, it has been difficult to achieve meaningful results in recent years, mainly because of the opposing interests of various countries. To think that it is possible to revitalize a Military Staff Committee whose functions it has never been possible to activate and to enable it to address disarmament and arms regulation of armaments does not seem to be a realistic way to achieve the desired objective.

The responsibility of the Security Council for the maintenance of international peace and security is mainly executive in nature. Debates in the Council on issues that are not on its agenda, even when they are open meetings, should not make us lose sight of the fact that this cannot replace the consideration of these issues by the General Assembly, which is the main deliberative organ of the United Nations. Even with the division of labour between the Council and the General Assembly set out in the Charter, the possibility of including disarmament issues in the Council's agenda cannot restrict possible action by the General Assembly in this regard.

Argentina has traditionally adopted a comprehensive approach towards the development of actions and initiatives in the field of disarmament and the regulation of armaments. We reiterate our long-standing position in favour of the role of multilateralism — and the United Nations in particular — in addressing the challenges posed by disarmament and non-proliferation.

With that in mind, Argentina would like to reaffirm its commitment to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons, the Chemical Weapons Convention, the Biological and Toxin Weapons Convention and other fundamental multilateral instruments. The Security Council should continue to play an important role in support of non-proliferation regimes for weapons of mass destruction in the context of its mandate in the maintenance of international peace and security. International cooperation in the area of non-proliferation of nuclear, chemical and biological weapons, their means of delivery and related materials, is extremely important for the achievement of the Security Council's objectives, namely, the fight against the threat to international peace and security posed by the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction and by international terrorism.

Furthermore, we believe that specific actions in the field of non-proliferation should be accompanied with a clear and specific commitment, reflected in an agenda for action in the field of disarmament by all the members of the international community.

Lastly, allow me to recall the special priority and attention that my country gives to progress in the area of conventional weapons. We have provided our strong and active support to the development of transparency and confidence-building measures, both in our region and internationally. In this context, we hope that, following the success of initiatives like the establishment of the United Nations Register of Conventional Arms, we can now take the next step towards the codification of the arms trade so as to provide the United Nations with tools to prevent flows of weapons that are excessive or destabilizing or that ignore the standards set by the Security Council. We therefore hope that we can make fruitful progress in that direction.

The President (*spoke in Spanish*): I now give the floor to the representative of Guatemala.

Mr. Rosenthal (Guatemala) (*spoke in Spanish*): Allow me to congratulate you, Sir, on presiding over the Security Council this month, as well as to thank you for having convened this open debate. That initiative is consistent with the long and courageous efforts of President Óscar Arias to support disarmament and peace, which we sincerely appreciate.

We are also grateful for the clear concept paper that your delegation has circulated among all delegations. The topic identified by you and your colleagues for this meeting can be addressed in many different ways. What makes the most sense to the vast majority of the countries of the world is the fact that spending on armaments and disproportionately sized military forces constitutes a poor allocation of resources. That is especially so given that the main threats facing humankind today are of equal to, or even greater than, those of armed aggression and terrorism. They include, first, hunger, poverty and social exclusion; secondly, environmental challenges, including global warming; and, thirdly, organized crime.

Your own country, Mr. President, is an example of the positive effects of diverting public resources from maintaining armed forces to social expenditures. That has produced notable tangible results, given Costa Rica's health and education indicators as compared to those of the rest of Central America.

Another element of this issue pertains to the institutional aspects of disarmament, in particular when it comes to determining who does what. For example, there is no clear dividing line within the United Nations between the functions of the General Assembly and those of the Security Council, nor between the work of the Conference on Disarmament at Geneva and the bodies based in New York, including the Disarmament Commission. Nor is there a neat dividing line between the functions of the United Nations and those of regional institutions, although we believe that the concept paper that Costa Rica has prepared for us is correct in placing strong emphasis on the cooperative relationship between the United Nations and regional disarmament bodies.

Another issue worth mentioning is the great value of conflict prevention efforts. Among other things, such efforts contribute to establishing an environment where States feel less inclined to undertake armed aggression. Such an environment is also conducive to

the pursuit of positive steps through reciprocal unilateral measures that are conducive to averting competition for military supremacy among States.

From the vantage point of my own country, our priority is to reduce and control small arms and light weapons and to prevent, combat and eradicate the illicit manufacturing, transfer, circulation and proliferation of those weapons. That priority gave rise to one of the many commitments contained in our peace accords of 1996, which we are attempting to implement through the adoption of a new arms and munitions law currently being debated in Guatemala's Congress.

We are also participating actively in the Central American Programme on Small Arms Control. The exchange of information on issues relating to control and tracing is one of the areas in which that regional programme is active. Guatemala therefore supports the early adoption of a legally binding instrument to establish common international standards on the import, export and transfer of conventional arms. Such a treaty should be transparent, non-discriminatory and negotiated at the multilateral level.

It is for all those reasons that we agree with the Government of Costa Rica that disarmament should have a prominent place on humankind's thematic agenda, as well as on that of the United Nations. My delegation believes that the efforts of the international community to address the problem of disarmament — in particular that of small arms — and the attention that the General Assembly has given to the issue will be significantly strengthened by the adoption of the draft presidential statement before the Security Council today. We are confident that it will provide further political impetus to efforts to implement the 2001 Programme of Action. It will also ensure that the United Nations continues to play a central role in the multilateral effort to combat the illicit trade in small arms and light weapons in all its aspects.

The President (*spoke in Spanish*): I now give the floor to the representative of Spain.

Mr. Yáñez-Barnuevo (Spain) (*spoke in Spanish*): My delegation appreciates the opportunity to participate in this open debate of the Security Council. I should like to congratulate Costa Rica and President Óscar Arias for this excellent initiative intended to launch a joint examination of the need to strengthen multilateral mechanisms for collective security and

adapt them to the new challenges facing today's world. In that regard, I should like to fully endorse the statement delivered this morning by the representative of France on behalf of the European Union.

The international community should be prepared to respond effectively to new and complex challenges in a coordinated and comprehensive manner. To that end, there is a need for renewed determination to establish effective multilateralism through which the United Nations, as the guarantor of international legality, can act as the essential instrument in facilitating cooperation that can allow us all to make progress in three inextricably linked priority areas, namely, the maintenance of international peace and security, economic and social development and respect for human rights and the rule of law.

The Charter of the United Nations confers various responsibilities on the Security Council and the General Assembly in the area of maintaining international peace and security. It also calls for appropriate interaction between those two primary organs as regards goals pursued by the Organization as a whole. We should welcome today's initiative by Costa Rica, which serves to frame the debate and calls on the Security Council, in close cooperation with other international and regional organizations, to support efforts to promote the establishment and maintenance of international peace and security. That could serve to open the way for a reduction in armaments and troops, thereby freeing up human and material resources for the achievement of economic and social development.

There is no doubt that the world must move forward in that direction and thereby avoid human and economic costs that weigh on the whole of humankind. As President Arias clearly noted this morning, that would make the attainment of the Millennium Development Goals by 2015 more feasible.

For Spain, as a member of the European Union, promoting and maintaining peace are hallmarks of our foreign policy and that is why we participate in many global and regional initiatives, in favour of non-proliferation, disarmament and arms control. In the context of the United Nations, Spain supports the work of the Security Council, participating in peacekeeping and conflict-prevention operations and strictly complying with its decisions and recommendations. Similarly, Spain participates

actively in the work of the General Assembly and supports many initiatives in the areas of the non-proliferation of weapons of mass destruction, disarmament and conventional weapons control. Spain has also subscribed to the universal conventions in this area. We take part in the principal negotiating forums and support the institutions and mechanisms that promote those objectives.

In the current international context, Governments and civil society must promote international and regional initiatives to counter the insecurity and armed violence in various parts of the world that seriously limit the development capacity of the most disadvantaged regions. A notable example is the Geneva Declaration on Armed Violence and Development of 2006, in which Spain participated alongside a broad group of countries and whose objective is to promote sustainable security and a culture of peace and to act to reduce armed violence and its adverse impact on socio-economic and human development.

Another specific example is the financial and technical support given by the Spanish Government to the United Nations Regional Centre for Peace, Disarmament and Development in Latin America and the Caribbean, which works to promote understanding and cooperation among States of the region in these areas of activity.

Along the same lines, Spain has been working actively on the implementation of the 2001 United Nations Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects, as well as other initiatives — for example, on anti-personnel mines and cluster munitions — that have a great impact in the humanitarian sphere and in general on the political stability and economic development of countries and the everyday lives of people.

Similarly, the Spanish Government has promoted the development of new international instruments and, in particular, a draft arms trade treaty of a legally binding nature that would establish universal criteria to regulate the world trade in conventional weapons. That is the spirit that inspired the Master Plan for Spanish Cooperation, the peacebuilding strategy of Spain's development cooperation and its sectoral plans, which include the three interconnected dimensions of security and defence, socio-economic development and political

development. The implementation of that cooperation policy has allowed Spain to become an important donor, in terms of both technical and financial assistance, in areas such as humanitarian de-mining, the removal of explosive remnants of war and the fight against the proliferation of small arms and light weapons, with particular attention to assisting victims, their families and the communities to which they belong. All of these actions are part of a genuine effort to move forward in the area of non-proliferation, disarmament and arms control and to achieve results that benefit millions of people throughout the world.

The international community must respond urgently and decisively to the new challenges heralded by the twenty-first century. It is the duty of all Member States to support the work of the United Nations by assuming the leadership necessary to bring us closer to a renewed system of collective security that is based on trust and equipped with a comprehensive approach through gradual steps in all the areas we have discussed. The objective is to build a stable peace based on respect for human rights, the promotion of good governance and sustainable development. As the initiative launched today by Costa Rica demonstrates, this task is in our hands and it is a moral duty of all, for the sake of future generations.

The President (spoke in Spanish): I call on the representative of Pakistan.

Mr. Haroon (Pakistan): The Pakistan delegation appreciates the holding of this debate. We hope that it will enhance understanding of various issues related to collective security and armament regulation.

We have always stressed the imperative of evolving a new consensus on the whole range of disarmament, arms control and non-proliferation issues. This new consensus should be based on the principles of the Charter of the United Nations, with full recognition of the role of the United Nations, reflecting the security interests of all States and guided by the principle of equal security for all.

The architecture of a global consensus on disarmament, arms control and non-proliferation should rest on a solid foundation comprising the following elements.

There must be a renewed commitment on the part all States to general and complete disarmament under effective international control. Transparency,

verifiability and irreversibility should be the fundamental principles applied to all disarmament measures. Pending general and complete nuclear disarmament, there should be a universal, non-discriminatory and legally binding instruments on negative security assurances to non-nuclear-weapon States.

There must be international agreement on universal and non-discriminatory criteria for international cooperation in the peaceful uses of nuclear energy, including nuclear power generation. Policies of selectively granting or denying access to civilian nuclear technology in disregard of any generally applicable criteria detract from the credibility and legitimacy of the non-proliferation regime.

Commitment is needed to evolving a universal and non-discriminatory agreement for addressing concerns arising from the development, deployment and proliferation of missiles and anti-ballistic missile systems, which are inherently destabilizing. The need for strengthening the international legal regime to prevent the militarization of outer space must be recognized.

In parallel with negotiations on nuclear disarmament, there is an urgent need for negotiations on the balanced reduction of armed forces and conventional armaments. As laid out in the Final Document of the first special session of the General Assembly devoted to disarmament, these negotiations should be conducted with a particular emphasis on militarily significant States. The disturbing trend of escalation in the number and sophistication of conventional weapons has to be arrested, as it has a causal relationship with the continuing reliance on nuclear weapons.

Cooperation in matters having strategic implications for a region should be pursued in such a manner as to ensure the right of each State to undiminished security, guaranteeing that no individual State or group of States may obtain advantage over others. Armament regulations should not only be aimed at transfer controls, but should also take into account existing asymmetries and military imbalances and stockpiles, as well as production and manufacturing.

Nevertheless, armament regulations alone cannot facilitate the objective of international peace and security unless pursued in parallel with efforts towards

the peaceful settlement of disputes and to remove underlying security concerns of States.

Regional tensions contribute to the arms race, not only endangering international peace and security, but also undermining efforts aimed at arms control and disarmament. Conflict resolution and the maintenance of strategic and conventional stability at the regional and global levels should therefore be at the core of efforts to strengthen international peace and security.

The principle of equal security for all necessitates open consultations and dialogue among States without preconditions. The best venue to pursue such consultations and negotiations is the General Assembly, in which all Member States are represented.

Entrusting the responsibility for collective security to the Security Council and the tendency of the Security Council to legislate on behalf of Member States on matters of armaments control are bound to raise security concerns among the overwhelming majority of developing countries that are not represented in the Council.

The existing export control arrangements, such as the Nuclear Suppliers Group and the Missile Technology Control Regime (MTCR), are exclusive. The restricted nature of certain export control arrangements is an impediment to the global implementation of non-proliferation standards. If States are required to meet the standards set by those arrangements, they should be given the opportunity to participate in them and benefit by sharing the best practices and experiences of the founding members of those arrangements in the area of export controls. That would also enable States to keep abreast of technical advancements.

Moreover, members of those exclusive arrangements have been creating discriminatory exceptions to their own rules, thus undermining the objective of international stability. Non criteria-based civil nuclear cooperation based on commercial consideration does nothing to promote international non-proliferation objectives. Similarly, the MTCR is undermined by international cooperation in the development of anti-ballistic missiles, which involves cooperation in dual-use technologies, such as solid fuel propulsion systems, missile targeting and guidance systems, and other systems that can be used to develop offensive weaponry and missiles.

I would like to conclude by reiterating the need to evolve multilaterally negotiated, non-discriminatory and universal regulations on armaments.

The President (*spoke in Spanish*): I now give the floor to the representative of Colombia.

Ms. Blum (Colombia) (*spoke in Spanish*): Allow me, Sir, to congratulate you on your work as President of the Security Council for the month of November. My delegation appreciates the convening of this debate on strengthening collective security through general regulation and reduction of armaments. The presence of Nobel Peace laureate President Óscar Arias Sánchez and his authoritative statement this morning add special pertinence and significance to the proposed discussion.

For Colombia, the close link that exists between security and development is clear. The democratic security policy implemented by the Government of President Alvaro Uribe is based on offering equal protection to all citizens and on creating the conditions in which they can enjoy their rights and liberties. That policy has produced a virtuous cycle in which the strengthening of the rule of law creates conditions for the promotion of development and economic prosperity, which in turn contributes to stronger civic participation and democracy.

While it has borne fruit, the democratic security policy has demanded great efforts, including military spending, which has been adapted to the challenges required to achieve the projected goals. During that process, Colombia has had a clear standpoint — we conceive military spending fundamentally as a vital investment in protecting our citizens' lives and well-being.

My country shares the concerns over the need to reallocate funds for military spending to development programmes without detriment to the security and defence needs of States, bearing in mind the specific needs of each. In that regard, we uphold our commitment to disarmament, development and the implementation of the General Assembly's resolutions on that issue.

Colombia's participation as a United Nations Member State is guided by the irrevocable commitment to multilateralism and the rule of law. We share the principles and values enshrined in the United Nations Charter. We highlight the visionary nature of Article

26, which provides for the competence of the Security Council to formulate plans to establish a system for the regulation of armaments. The goal of promoting the establishment and maintenance of international peace and security, with the least diversion for armaments of human and economic resources remains fully valid.

Moreover, Colombia believes that any new initiative concerning the control and regulation of armaments must be discussed and agreed within the United Nations General Assembly. A successful outcome in that area can be achieved only with the commitment of all States Members of the Organization.

Today, the issue of security has a multidimensional reach. In the contemporary world, there are factors that transcend the traditional threats to security. In that regard, we concur with the position set out in the concept paper circulated by Costa Rica (S/2008/697) with regard to the important role that cooperation between the United Nations and regional organizations plays in preserving collective security.

In that regard, I would like to highlight the work and orientation of the Organization of American States (OAS) in building reciprocal confidence measures among the countries of our region. That has occurred through many initiatives, including, among others, promoting transparency, such as the publication of defence books on national policies in that area.

In addition, the OAS promotes the eradication of anti-personnel mines and monitors observance of commitments under the Treaty of Tlatelolco and the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons. By virtue of those treaties, the first nuclear-weapon-free zone in a densely populated area was established in Latin America and the Caribbean. The OAS also promotes cooperation in our region through multilateral peace efforts and the joint fight against international terrorism.

The uncontrolled spread and inappropriate use of small arms and light weapons cause great harm, both in terms of human lives and in their negative impact on security and development conditions. The illicit trade in small arms and light weapons in all its aspects monopolizes significant resources that could be invested in development. Advancing the establishment of effective controls to stop that illicit trade must therefore be a priority for the international community.

Colombia attaches great importance to the Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects. It is a fundamental global instrument and a reference point for the adoption of measures to combat that phenomenon.

Colombia considers it necessary to continue working in this area within the multilateral framework and advancing towards the adoption of new commitments and the implementation of those already in place with the aim of concluding legally binding instruments in the field. The broad participation of States in the implementation of the Programme of Action is an essential requirement for that endeavour.

My delegation actively participates at all levels in initiatives that contribute to coordinated and effective action against the illicit trade in small arms and light weapons in all its aspects. More concrete progress in that area would be a fundamental contribution to collective security.

The strengthening of collective security through general regulation and reduction of armaments, as well as other initiatives proposed to that end, merit careful consideration by the United Nations and its principal organs.

The changes that have taken place in the world since the 1990s have generated conditions for a new consensus in the area of security. It is therefore necessary, from that perspective, to step up our efforts and will for joint action as the only way to save future generations from the scourges that threaten peace, security and development.

The President (*spoke in Spanish*): I give the floor to the Permanent Observer of the Holy See.

Archbishop Migliore (Holy See) (*spoke in Spanish*): I thank you, Sir, for inviting my delegation to take part in this important debate.

(*spoke in English*)

My delegation expresses its appreciation for the convening of this open debate with the goal of addressing the necessity of general regulation and reduction of armaments and armed forces with a view towards strengthening international peace and security.

The dramatic consequences of the illicit global arms trade call the international community to redouble its commitment to create new control mechanisms.

With the recent adoption of a draft resolution entitled "Towards an arms trade treaty" in the First Committee of the General Assembly, which lays down the first important step towards a legally binding instrument on arms trade and transfers, this debate is not only timely but vital to reinvigorating efforts in global arms reduction. The Holy See fully supports and encourages such an undertaking in this body and by the entire international community, and stands ready to make its contribution.

The initiative of the Security Council to address the issue of the regulation and reduction of armaments is interlinked with the continued worldwide problems of security and is gaining momentum around the world. Recently, during the general debate within the First Committee of the General Assembly, we heard a delegate from Africa say that for every African, there are seven illicit bullets and three guns targeted at him or her. This is scandalous, especially at a time when an unacceptably high ratio of the world's population still lives below the poverty line.

That is but one example among many. My delegation shares the grave concern of conflict-ridden countries, whose experience tells us that the illicit trade in arms and their accumulation and illicit production are a hindrance to the peaceful settlement of disputes, turn tensions into armed conflicts and are a key factor in prolonging them, thus heavily compromising peace and development.

The lack of regulation and commitment to reducing global arms supplies has created a world in which weapons are more easily obtainable than food, shelter and education. Clearly, by dedicating even a portion of the \$1.3 trillion spent on arms to programmes designed to promote the full social, economic and spiritual growth of people, we will not only be creating a better and safer world, but also promoting new respect for life and one another.

In that context, my delegation wishes to echo the voices of hundreds of thousands in the Democratic Republic of the Congo crying out for justice, peace, security and the ability to simply live in dignity on their own soil. The Holy See strongly condemns the massacres being committed under the eyes of the international community in the Democratic Republic of the Congo and calls for all efforts to stop that human tragedy.

The entry into force on 5 May 2006 of the Nairobi Protocol for the Prevention, Control and Reduction of Small Arms and Light Weapons in the Great Lakes Region and the Horn of Africa marked an important step towards establishing universal standards for protecting civilian populations in the Great Lakes region, the Horn of Africa and bordering States. We realize that the very States where massacres take place these days have signed and ratified the Nairobi Protocol. The Holy See urges all of them to expedite its implementation.

In conclusion, my delegation fully agrees that there is a need to develop a new security consensus that will assist in achieving the internationally agreed development goals, security and respect for human rights. Greater efforts, political will, transparency, flexibility and openness are needed. My delegation shares the view that, in launching such a process, the first and most important step is to ensure that States abide by the treaties they have signed and ratified and maintain collectively agreed levels of military spending.

The President (spoke in Spanish): I give the floor to the representative of Austria.

Mr. Pfanzelter (Austria): Let me begin by thanking you, Sir, for this highly significant initiative. We have often said that arms control, disarmament and non-proliferation need more political attention. In view of rising arms expenditures worldwide, concerns about national nuclear programmes and little progress in the international disarmament forums, we must use every opportunity to discuss those pressing issues. Today's event demonstrates that the world's pre-eminent security forum, the Security Council, gives full attention to all aspects of disarmament, peace and development.

Last month, Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon outlined five points for progress in the field of arms control and called for a fresh start not just for disarmament, but for strengthening our system of international peace and security. The debate today and the concept paper presented by Costa Rica (S/2008/697) are part of such a fresh start.

I would like to raise two issues of importance to the Austrian Government. The first concerns the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT). By their very nature, nuclear tests are a deliberate threat to peace and security. Twenty years after the end of the

cold war, the language of threats should no longer be used today.

The entry into force of the CTBT is long overdue. As a co-Chair of the Conference on Facilitating the Entry into Force of the CTBT — an honour we share with our partner Costa Rica — Austria is actively working for the early entry force of the CTBT by sponsoring CTBT conferences and workshops in different parts of the world. Since 2007 we have witnessed growing momentum towards the universalization of the CTBT, as demonstrated by the recent ratifications by the Bahamas, Barbados, Colombia, Malaysia and Mozambique, as well as by the signatures of Iraq and Timor-Leste.

The CTBT Ministerial Meeting of 24 September 2008 in New York demonstrated the widespread interest in bringing the Treaty into force. I would like to take this opportunity to call on all States that have not yet ratified the Treaty to do so as soon as possible.

A second issue of concern to my Government is conventional arms and, in particular, an arms trade treaty. Success stories at the intersection of disarmament, humanitarian law and the rule of law, such as the Ottawa Convention on Landmines, have been inspiring examples of the fact that legal arms control and disarmament not only are an aspiration, but also can become a reality with the necessary political will.

A very recent example is the Convention on Cluster Munitions, which was agreed in May and will be opened for signature at the Signing Conference in Oslo on 3 December. As one of the States that have actively campaigned for the treaty, Austria hopes that many States will come to Oslo and be part of the process of banning a weapon that has proved to have terrible consequences for civilians.

Such success stories give us hope. With more than 1,000 people dying daily from firearms, regulation of the trade in conventional weapons, including small arms and light weapons, should be a matter of the highest priority for all United Nations Member States. Irresponsible arms transfers foment violent conflicts, perpetuate poverty and underdevelopment, and contribute to violations of human rights and humanitarian law.

Thirteen years ago, Mr. Óscar Arias Sánchez, President of Costa Rica, called upon a group of fellow

Nobel Peace laureates to promote an international campaign for the establishment of an agreement to control arms transfers, drafting the Nobel Peace Laureates' International Code of Conduct on Arms Transfers. From the very beginning, Austria has fully supported the process towards an arms trade treaty and hopes that the Open-ended Working Group will succeed in creating the basis for a robust and legally binding instrument in 2009.

The multilateral regulation of the nuclear fuel cycle could be another way to increase confidence and mutual trust among States, thereby creating an environment more conducive to arms control and nuclear disarmament. Austria believes that it is time to design a framework suited to the nuclear realities of this century — a framework that places the most dangerous technologies, enrichment and reprocessing, under the multilateral control of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA). Accompanied by fair and equitable rules of transparency and access, those States that have opted for nuclear energy could have access to all the nuclear fuel they need under the control of the Agency, which would be responsible for ensuring safety and security. The creation of an IAEA fuel bank, currently under discussion, could be a first step in that direction.

In conclusion, Austria wishes in particular to place on record its full support for multilateralism and the rule of law, existing international treaties and conventions, and initiatives for new global security treaties.

The President (*spoke in Spanish*): I now call on the representative of Morocco.

Mr. Chabar (Morocco) (*spoke in French*): I should like at the outset, on behalf of my delegation, to thank you, Mr. President, for having organized this important debate on an issue that remains a major concern of the international community. We also wish to thank Ambassador Sergio Duarte, High Representative for Disarmament Affairs, for his important briefing this morning.

Collective security is the basic concept that guided the founders of the United Nations when they created the Organization. Accordingly, it represents the major objective towards which all United Nations activities are directed.

It has been only three years since the 2005 World Summit, at which the Secretary-General issued his report, largely inspired by the recommendations of the High-level Panel on Threats, Challenges and Change, which he himself had established in 2003 to take an in-depth look at ways to adapt the United Nations system to the needs of the twenty-first century and to predict new threats to collective security.

Since then, it has been agreed that such threats, which undermine collective security, also include intra- and inter-State conflicts, terrorism, organized crime, weapons of mass destruction, poverty, deadly epidemics and climate change. All those threats jeopardize human survival and undermine the stability and security of States.

Based on the report of the Secretary-General, the 2005 World Summit Outcome (General Assembly resolution 60/1) placed collective security at the heart of the interdependent triad of development, security and human rights. That triad reflects the intertwining of diverse threats whose assuredly indiscriminate effects are felt in all regions throughout the world. The equation is simple: address all those ills with equal effectiveness, without any discrimination, and deal with each threat in the same way as the others, because it has been well established that threats transcend borders and that their effects are universal.

One of those recurrent threats is, of course, the outbreak of intra- or inter-State conflicts, whose sporadic effects on stability in subregions, regions and even continents are immediate. How, then, can we put an end to conflicts that continue to break out? How can we prevent countries emerging from conflicts from relapsing into them?

The participants in the 2005 World Summit provided an innovative answer when they decided to establish the Peacebuilding Commission, thus filling a fundamental gap in the institutional structure of the United Nations in order to help countries make a successful transition from war to lasting peace. Since the Commission's establishment, its work has proved arduous and requires the mobilization of increased resources in order to assist in the implementation of integrated peacebuilding strategies. In other words, the commitment of partners, regional and international institutions, donors and countries that are in a position to do so must be systematic, constant and concrete.

However, all our peacebuilding efforts would not be complete without effective control of the illicit trade in weapons, which continue to circulate and jeopardize peace processes. How can we aspire to peace, given the excessive accumulation of weapons whose destructive effects continue to undermine all peacekeeping, peacebuilding and development efforts? How can we justify financing the weapons trade through mining, oil and other resources when they should finance the needs of populations?

In that regard, significant efforts and real political will must be deployed to achieve the consolidation and implementation of the existing legal instruments in this area and, if necessary, to establish new legal rules, in particular to regulate the transfer and brokering of conventional weapons in order to control their circulation.

But the danger of small arms and light weapons is not our only cause for concern. The existence of weapons of mass destruction is a perpetual high-risk threat that continues to hang over the future of the world. Undoubtedly, the universality of a treaty as important as the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons, a cornerstone of disarmament and nuclear non-proliferation, serves the common objective of collective security. Collective security requires the renunciation of proliferation and a commitment to total and complete disarmament, without which the risk of the acquisition of such weapons by non-State actors is very plausible.

Indeed, collective security is a two-sided coin: one side is non-proliferation, and the other is disarmament. Our world deserves such security, and if we are to achieve it, both of those requirements must be met.

Article 26 of the United Nations Charter requires the Security Council to play a proactive role not only in peacekeeping itself, but also in promoting it by drawing up plans to be submitted to Members of the Organization with a view to establishing a system for the regulation of armaments. In the same spirit, in its resolution 41 (1) of 14 December 1946, the General Assembly also reaffirmed that obligation of the Council by recommending that the latter formulate practical measures for the regulation and reduction of armaments.

To date, the Security Council has taken no action in that regard, which to a certain extent has encouraged

States to increase their military spending, to the detriment of their development needs. It has also fostered major black markets in weapons in the absence of control and regulation. In 2006, a small group of States, including Morocco, concerned by the harmful effects of armed violence in poor countries affected by conflict, adopted the Geneva Declaration on Armed Violence and Development, which identified a close correlation between those two antithetical notions whereby a reduction in armed violence fosters sustainable development.

The States that signed the Declaration are committed to stepping up their efforts to integrate the reduction of armed violence into their national, regional and international development strategies and their humanitarian assistance and crisis management initiatives. In that regard, my delegation welcomes the adoption by the General Assembly on 17 November of resolution 63/23 on promoting development through the reduction and prevention of armed violence.

Arms limitation is important, but not sufficient in and of itself. The key is human, economic and social development. The key is in the consolidation of States' cooperation and international assistance for development.

Human development must supersede armament. We must focus our action on that profitable market instead of on military expenditures, which some States have made their primary objective. Human development must allow us to emerge from poverty and destitution. It must have the human individual at its heart and strive for the full flourishing of human beings and their development. The quest for a better life is eternal and, as Aristotle said so well, every social organization must be evaluated on the basis of its contribution to humankind. That is precisely the philosophy underlying the human development initiative launched in 2005 by His Majesty King Mohammed VI of Morocco.

The President (spoke in Spanish): I give the floor to the representative of Canada.

Mr. McNee (Canada): Canada wishes to thank President Arias and Costa Rica for bringing this important discussion to the Security Council. Canada applauds the initiative of Costa Rica to ensure that the Council exercises all Articles of the Charter at its disposal in the fulfilment of its mandated role in the

larger goal of maintaining international peace and security.

At a time when existing multilateral disarmament institutions appear unable to move forward on new multilateral arms control and disarmament treaties, Canada would welcome actionable proposals from the Council relating to Article 26, as proposed in Costa Rica's concept paper. A more proactive Security Council role would serve to strengthen our treaty-based multilateral agreements and bodies and help make them more relevant and robust.

Greater involvement and leadership by the Council on disarmament issues would be welcome and could be significant in helping to overcome serious challenges in the existing disarmament machinery. The decade-long deadlock in the Conference on Disarmament and the significant gaps in consensus within the Disarmament Commission and the First Committee — most notably on nuclear issues — speak to the need for the revitalization of our international efforts.

That said, leadership by the Council would also need to be accompanied by more constructive engagement by all countries. "A system for the regulation of armaments", as proposed in Article 26, would require buy-in by the world community as a whole. We would also note that any decision regarding renewed activity of the Military Staff Committee, after a prolonged period of disuse, would require significant consultation and further study.

Canada also supports the importance the concept paper ascribes to Member States' abiding by the treaties to which they are parties, as compliance is a critical element of any legally binding agreement. Increased transparency in military expenditures and arms transfers can also assist in building confidence measures between States and enhancing security.

(spoke in French)

Finally, Costa Rica's paper highlights the valuable and cost-effective role of regional organizations in promoting international peace and security. So, too, does Canada recognize the need for greater coordination and support in order for the many regional agreements to achieve greater effectiveness and realize potential synergies. Regular, comprehensive interaction between regional organizations and the Council would be beneficial in that regard.

In conclusion, Canada will follow with interest the outcome of today's open debate and appreciates this opportunity to contribute.

The President (*spoke in Spanish*): I give the floor to the representative of Armenia.

Mr. Martirosyan (Armenia): At the outset, I would like to thank you, Sir, for organizing this timely debate on an important and topical subject. Armenia and the South Caucasus as a whole are facing a number of challenges stemming from the lack of regional security arrangements and a deficiency of existing arms control and regulation mechanisms.

The experience of the decades after the Second World War testifies that collective security arrangements are viable and can stand the test of time if they are based at the very least on consensus and a common perception of security threats. The European security architecture was established on the basis of the political realities of the cold-war era. Since that time, the geopolitical situation in the Euro-Atlantic area has undergone dramatic changes. New threats have emerged, and therefore some valid questions about the relevance and efficiency of pan-European security have arisen over the past two decades.

It was no accident that the idea to convene a summit to discuss the future of the European security system emerged during the discussions at the recent European Union-Russia high-level meeting. We concur with those who believe that, before convening such a summit and undertaking steps towards improving the existing security mechanisms, members of the Euro-Atlantic community should rather refrain from any radical actions that might complicate the current security environment.

Regrettably, the South Caucasus is a region where a number of unresolved conflicts still exist in the absence of regional security arrangements. In such circumstances, the Treaty on Conventional Armed Forces in Europe has been playing an instrumental role in the maintenance of peace and stability in the South Caucasus. However, in our region that pivotal agreement is being challenged. Over the past few years, the ceilings for conventional weapons established for the countries of our region have been violated by one State of the South Caucasus.

In addition, over the past few years we have witnessed a relentless arms race, along with the

unprecedented growth of military expenditures, in the countries of the South Caucasus. Those dangerous developments are taking place against the backdrop of belligerent rhetoric. The lack of trust among conflicting parties, coupled with the current absence of confidence-building measures, is threatening the overall security situation in the region. The recent events in Georgia were the grave consequences of such developments.

Thus, we strongly believe that before a comprehensive security arrangement is forged, the countries of the South Caucasus need to commit themselves to the non-use of force in the settlement of unresolved conflicts. In that context, the joint declaration on Nagorny Karabakh signed on 2 November in Moscow by the Presidents of Armenia, Azerbaijan and Russia can play a promising role.

Having mentioned the necessity of a comprehensive security treaty for the region, I would like to point out the recent proposal on a Caucasus security platform made by the Prime Minister of Turkey. The initial reaction from the leaders of the State concerned was encouraging. We hope that countries of the region and other interested parties will be more consistent in ensuring that this proposal is not as futile as analogous proposals previously presented by regional and external actors have been.

In speaking about general regulation and control of arms, I would like to commend the initiative on an arms trade treaty introduced by the Government of the United Kingdom two years ago. The scope of support for the resolution on this issue (General Assembly resolution 61/89) brings hope for the establishment of an effective global regulatory mechanism for arms transfer.

In conclusion, I would like to reiterate Armenia's firm commitment to contributing to the efforts of strengthening present international mechanisms on arms control and global security as well as to participating constructively in future deliberations.

The President (spoke in Spanish): I now give the floor to the representative of the United Republic of Tanzania.

Mr. Seruhere (United Republic of Tanzania): At the outset, Mr. President, let me congratulate you on having convened this meeting on the subject of strengthening collective security through general

regulation and reduction of armaments. The meeting could not have come at a better or more opportune moment: this is a time when a conventional arms build-up is taking place in some regions, including in some conflict areas in Africa. Your decision, Sir, is highly commendable.

As we speak, small arms and light weapons are playing havoc in the eastern part of the Democratic Republic of the Congo. Hundreds of thousands of innocent civilians who have escaped death have been displaced and are faced with imminent danger and a risk of war-related death from disease or hunger. The international humanitarian response leaves a lot to be desired.

Tanzania is committed, along with the African Union, to resolving the conflict in the eastern Democratic Republic of the Congo in collaboration with the United Nations. In that regard, we commend the efforts undertaken by the Special Envoy of the Secretary-General, the former President of Nigeria, General Olusegun Obasanjo. We encourage the Security Council to step up support for the Secretary-General's initiatives, including by approving the proposal that has been submitted on increasing the number of peacekeeping troops for the Democratic Republic of the Congo.

Through Security Council resolution 1653 (2006) of January 2006, Tanzania and the United Nations expressed concern and urged the disarmament of rebel groups and negative elements in the Great Lakes region. To date, armed conflict continues unabated; this conflict has its recent origins in the conflict of 1990s in the Great Lakes region of Africa and continues despite a series of meetings and agreements between the belligerents. Equally important, the Council called upon countries of the region to agree on confidence-building measures. Confidence-building measures are essential to conflict resolution, and ending conflicts will inevitably curtail the excess demand for weapons. In the Great Lakes region, that would mean a significant reduction in the circulation and proliferation of small arms and light weapons.

We commend the efforts made by the United Nations in keeping the peace and maintaining security, insofar as the conflict has not spilled beyond the borders of the Democratic Republic of the Congo. But together we can do a lot more by beefing up the peacekeeping force and enabling it to be more robust in

its rules of engagement. We must enable Governments in the region and the affected civilian population to have more confidence in the United Nations Organization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo.

Conflict exacerbation in the eastern Democratic Republic of the Congo is occasioned by the armament of rebels and negative elements, among other things. We need not point fingers at possible sources, but we should curtail inflows of arms and ammunition to the rebels and negative elements, in addition to addressing their concerns as the situation may demand. We urge the relevant arms monitoring committees of the Security Council to intensify oversight on arms trafficking in the region.

Besides negotiations to end conflict, it is important to have an international instrument on arms production and distribution that would limit that business to State actors. A combination of legal instruments, political will and disarmament tools and procedures, through the work of the United Nations and regional and subregional organizations, could go a long way in ensuring the regulation and reduction of armaments. In that regard, we call upon Member States and all people of goodwill to support United Nations endeavours to agree on a comprehensive arms trade treaty which will specifically address the menace of small arms and light weapons.

The President (*spoke in Spanish*): I now give the floor to the representative of Qatar.

Mr. Al-Nasser (Qatar) (*spoke in Arabic*): I would like at the outset to congratulate you, Sir, on your successful presidency of the Security Council and on having chosen the theme of strengthening collective security through general regulation and reduction of armaments. We agree that this is among the factors that are conducive to peace and development.

Our understanding is that the Security Council's review of this theme today is based on its connection to threats to international peace and security, on the basis of Article 24 of the Charter, which explicitly sets out the mandate of the Security Council, and Article 26, which requires the agreement of the General Assembly on any proposal made by the Council concerning any approach relating to arms regulation. It is also based on United Nations system-wide coherence, taking into account the fact that United Nations bodies are mutually reinforcing and complementary, and

preserving the mandate of the multilateral disarmament machinery when dealing with any issue related to disarmament and international security.

Chapter VIII of the Charter sets out the importance of activating the role of regional and subregional organizations and of fostering cooperation between those organizations and the United Nations on issues related to the maintenance of international peace and security.

Building on that concept, the Gulf Cooperation Council, the League of Arab States and the African Union are examples of regional organizations that are active in legislating and implementing disarmament, in compliance with the United Nations approach in this field. This enables those organizations to successfully complement the role played by the United Nations in the maintenance of international peace and security. Accordingly, in the light of the principle of collective security, the United Nations has the responsibility to provide those organizations with the support they need to effectively play their role, especially in regions experiencing armed conflicts and visible and hidden flows of arms.

The world's annual expenditure on armament has reached nearly \$1 trillion. Considering the interrelationship among disarmament, security and development, it is easy to imagine what we could have done to achieve development goals if that amount of money had been invested in improving conditions of human life worldwide, and the amount of the Security Council's time and effort that could have been saved.

It would thus be useful if the Member States implemented the General Assembly's repeated resolutions on the relationship between disarmament and development, which emerge from the work of the First Committee. Such resolutions are adopted annually, by an overwhelming majority. They set out a practical approach to address new challenges facing the international community regarding development and the elimination of poverty and the pandemic diseases that afflict humanity, through a preventive approach based on the benefits gained from reallocating armament-oriented expenditures to the attainment of development goals.

Foreign occupation of the lands of other peoples is a serious threat to international peace and security, for it leads not only to chaos, economic destruction, flows of weapons and the depletion of the international

community's resources, but also, consequently, to the loss of development opportunities. In fact, the international financial crisis that the world is facing today is convincing evidence of that clear fact.

The State of Qatar believes that the commitment of Member States to implement the arms regulation and reduction agreements that they have undertaken is the basis for the success of these agreements and for bringing them to fruition. That would in turn bring about prosperity and development for all mankind.

Thus, it is worth recalling that measures to verify respect for those commitments are set out in the relevant agreements themselves, and are based on the consent of relevant States parties. In that regard, non-compliance with such agreements should not be used as a pretext for unilateral action or for employing means beyond the scope of multilateralism and international legitimacy. Otherwise, the international community would lose the benefits of its pre-eminent agreement: the Charter of the United Nations, which should be preserved and abided by in order to achieve security, peace and development.

The President (*spoke in Spanish*): I now give the floor to the representative of Bolivia.

Mr. Siles Alvarado (Bolivia) (*spoke in Spanish*): I would like at the outset to thank and commend the delegation of Costa Rica for having organized an event of such importance, especially for small countries, such as Costa Rica, which has set an undeniable example of following a pacifist policy — an example worthy of emulation. Bolivia too has begun a process where we are giving very clear signals that the only path guaranteeing international peace and security is precisely that of dialogue and of commitment to a culture of peace.

Bolivia, like few other countries in the world, has gone through periods of great violence and great aggression. From 1810 to 1825, we experienced 15 years of armed struggle against the Spanish Crown, and much blood was shed. Afterwards, during the period of the Republic, Bolivia was the victim of wars of aggression. As a result of these, just as it was coming to life as a republic, it lost more than 1.2 million square kilometres — more than half — of its territory, falling victim to aggression by some neighbouring countries, and victim to the terror and violence of dictatorial military Governments under the

umbrella of the cold war and, moreover, sponsored by one of the most powerful countries in the region.

This period of violence has not ended. Barely two months ago, we experienced a massacre, we hope the last, caused by the opposition to the Government of President Evo Morales, an opposition which feels hatred and racism against those peoples that have always been marginalized in Bolivian society. This hatred and racism gave rise to a massacre against defenceless farmers, which was condemned by practically all countries in the world — except the most powerful country in the region.

Convinced that the path to international peace is based on dialogue, which itself is based on disarmament, not only physical disarmament, but also spiritual, Bolivia is about to adopt a new political constitution, whose article 10 States that:

"Bolivia is a pacifist State which promotes the culture of peace and the right to peace, as well as cooperation among the peoples of the region and the world in order to contribute to mutual understanding, equitable development and the promotion of interculturalism, with full respect for the sovereignty of States. Bolivia rejects all wars of aggression as a means of settling differences and conflicts among States and reserves the right to legitimate self-defence in the case of aggression which threatens the independence or integrity of the State.

"The installation of foreign military bases on Bolivian territory is prohibited."

Article 10, clearly, expresses Bolivia's will to begin a new era of building true peace in the world.

In the course of this debate, we have heard very encouraging statements, such as that of the United Kingdom, which clearly expressed the position that in order to move forward in the non-proliferation of nuclear weapons, we also have to emphasize the process of disarmament of those countries that possess nuclear weapons. My delegation would like to hear that same statement and we would like to see that same decision among those States whose possession of nuclear weapons is the real threat to international peace and security. It is not true that in recent years the greatest danger to peace has been something that is local, limited to internal conflicts. It is not simply the

internal conflicts of every country that could possibly threaten global peace.

Let us not forget the international conflicts — the acts of war in Afghanistan and in Iraq. We will not ask whether the reasons were good or bad, as for us, all wars are bad. Furthermore, just a few days ago we heard statements from a State official who suggested that the war in Iraq should continue — and this was in inverted commas — because he had just signed a major arms contract with the country on whose behalf he was speaking.

There has been a great deal said about the illicit arms trade, but I wonder whether the licit arms trade would be less deadly than the illicit arms trade. We all aim to tighten the ban on the trafficking of illegal weapons. We all agree that we have to combat arms trafficking, but we also have to remember that many of the armed conflicts are the result of the stinginess of those countries that promote war and the industry of war. Why does the United Nations not take the initiative to generate a project that would make it possible to systematically ban arms production? Arms are the true cause of conflicts.

My country has experienced two wars that were caused, not by hatred or conflict between brothers or with neighbouring countries, but rather by the interests of transnational firms, which organized and planned the armed conflicts.

Lastly, even though there are many topics that I would like to mention here, I simply want to conclude by mentioning the need to analyze the consequences of encouraging the arms race in regions where we have less developed countries, countries with the greatest needs. Many of these countries feel threatened by the belligerent discourse of their neighbours, because the neighbours receive contributions of millions and millions (of dollars) worth of armaments, and because their neighbours receive loans as well in order to arm themselves. Of course, this forces every country to naturally feel the need to find a mechanism with which to defend itself, even at the cost of hunger for its people.

I believe that, in the final analysis, the United Nations must take measures that would be aimed at eliminating this scandalous supply of arms.

The President (*spoke in Spanish*): I now give the floor to the representative of Benin.

Mr. Zinsou (Benin) (*spoke in French*): Mr. President, my delegation thanks you for organizing today's public meeting. We greatly appreciate the presence here of the President of Costa Rica and his personal contribution, which considerably raises the tone of this important public event taking place during the term of office of Costa Rica in the presidency of the Security Council.

The topic is of importance in order to achieve the major objectives of the United Nations. Nothing distinguishes the United Nations Charter as much as the explicit link established between peace, international security, development and the promotion of respect for individual rights and fundamental freedoms. This relationship is reflected quite clearly in Article 26 of the Charter.

Benin recalled the appeal made in Article 26 of the Charter in our statement made during the general debate of the sixty-third session in the First Committee, where we expressed our grave concern over the considerable increase in military expenditures among Member States. The topic of our discussion today, then, puts at the forefront of the Security Council's agenda this crucial function granted to it by the Charter, which it has not been able to carry out because of unfavourable circumstances accompanying its development since the entry into force of the Charter.

The Security Council's inaction in the area of arms regulation and reduction is linked to the development of nuclear weapons and their proliferation in the context of the cold war. Regional conflicts, which increased during that period, are also part of the framework of that major confrontation. At the end of the cold war, the entire world had cherished the hope of reaping the real dividends of peace by beginning strategic cooperation among the major Powers in order to face the challenges to humankind at the beginning of the third millennium. If the bilateral disarmament agreements in nuclear weapons concluded in the 1990s made such hopes credible, the current situation is one of grave concern. We see an increase of 45 per cent in military expenditures in the same period, with real or supposed proliferation risks generated by the deadlock in which the disarmament machinery administered by the General Assembly finds itself. This has happened because the Security Council has played only a marginal role in the regulation and reduction of armaments called for in Article 26. We can no longer

let this situation, which is totally unacceptable, further frustrate the expectations of humankind.

By opening a public debate on the strengthening of collective security through a general regulation and reduction of armaments as the safest way to peace and development, your country, Mr. President, has begun an undertaking of crucial importance. We hope that the Security Council will seize this new opportunity to resume leadership in efforts to stem the arms race throughout the world. If it is able to do so, it will create conditions favourable for a realization of the promise of peace, of security, of development and of the promotion of respect for basic human rights, as contained in the Millennium Declaration adopted at the 2000 Millennium Summit and in the Final Document of the 2005 World Summit of the United Nations General Assembly.

My delegation therefore fully agrees with the analysis proposed in the concept paper (S/2008/697, annex) drawn up by your country, Sir, to guide our thoughts on this topic. We endorse the major ideas put forth in paragraphs 10 to 20 of that document for tackling the challenges described in it.

The Security Council must implement those ideas in a meaningful manner by working relentlessly to make the collective security system established by the Charter fully operational in all its dimensions. It should endeavour to regain control over the unacceptable distortions plaguing international peace and security by fully shouldering its responsibilities, with strict respect for the principles of the sovereign equality of States, whether large or small. The Security Council should become a major inspiration for multilateralism, consistently making use of its universal competencies and the regional coordination required for their effective exercise.

In this regard, Benin would like to draw the attention of the Security Council to the very interesting study by Professor Paul Collier of Oxford University on regional coordination for the reduction of military expenditures. The peacekeeping and conflict prevention mechanisms established in various parts of the world should be designed to build the architecture of the collective security system envisaged in Chapter VIII of the Charter.

The African Union has achieved considerable progress in this area and has repeatedly expressed its desire that the Security Council and the United Nations

express their appreciation for its efforts, in part by financing peacekeeping operations conducted under the mandate of the Council. It is important to promote in this regard effective cooperation among States in order to ensure international peace and security at less cost. In this regard, Benin welcomes the operational guidelines contained in resolutions 1625 (2005), 1631 (2005) and 1809 (2008), which are rightly recalled in your letter, Sir, on today's debate.

At the same time, the Security Council should mobilize the international community to meaningful action to eliminate the root causes of conflict, through developing the interdependence of States, their internal relations and the relationship between man and nature. The major challenges that this involves prove the total inconsistency of the arms race. In order to face those challenges, the reform under way in the international system should be aimed resolutely towards evolving a new logic that embodies in the best possible way the major principles of the United Nations Charter.

The President (*spoke in Spanish*): I now give the floor to the representative of Algeria.

Mr. Benmechidi (*Algeria*) (*spoke in French*): Allow me first of all to welcome the presence of His Excellency President Óscar Arias Sánchez at this debate. I would like to congratulate his delegation on their accession to the presidency of the Security Council for the month of November. I would also like to thank the delegation of Costa Rica for this praiseworthy initiative of organizing an open debate on such an important topic.

The year 2008 marks the 30th anniversary of the first special session of the General Assembly devoted to disarmament, which was a historic turning point in multilateral efforts for general disarmament and in the role of the General Assembly in particular. The outcome document of that session served as a guide for the efforts of the Organization in that area.

That awakening of the international community brought about a climate of détente and cooperation that promised better prospects for dialogue and consultation on the subject of disarmament. We saw a qualitative change in attitudes, which allowed for more flexible positions and the undertaking of initiatives that had long been held up by narrow-minded power struggles.

Today, we are forced to acknowledge that the hope prompted by those efforts to free humankind from

the threat of weapons of mass destruction has dwindled. As a result, many questions have arisen, as the risks related to the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction and the development of a new generation of arms have never been greater. That situation is obviously highlighted by the emergence of new and pressing threats that are of great concern for the entire international community.

Given the situation, the preservation of international peace and security and the resolution of conflicts, in particular conflicts that are related to decolonization, represent a common challenge for the entire international community. We have to tackle this task in order to establish together the conditions necessary for a thorough change in attitudes and to lay the foundations of the collective security system that we all aspire to and that is the safest path to peace and development.

Such a challenge, in our opinion, requires a commitment to the promotion of the rule of law and the rehabilitation of a multilateral negotiating framework in order to provide global and sustainable solutions to questions of disarmament and non-proliferation. Such efforts depend on the implementation of commitments that we have all undertaken together in the area of disarmament and the total elimination of weapons of mass destruction, which is the only real guarantee of security for all.

Algeria is resolutely committed to fulfilling all its obligations stemming from the regional and international instruments to which it is a party. We will spare no effort, within the framework of the regional and multilateral entities to which we belong, to support and promote initiatives designed to relaunch the process of nuclear disarmament, non-proliferation and arms control.

In this respect, my delegation shares the concerns of many delegations, notably African delegations, regarding the risks presented by proliferation and the illicit trafficking of light weapons, the destabilizing effects of which seriously undermine international peace and stability and development.

The President (*spoke in Spanish*): I now give the floor to the representative of Japan.

Mr. Takasu (Japan): I would like to commend the laudable initiative of Costa Rica to highlight the importance of disarmament and development at this

Security Council debate under the leadership of Nobel laureate President Óscar Arias Sánchez. Costa Rica is well known as a country with no standing army and is, therefore, best positioned to take up such an initiative.

Strengthening multilateralism and collective security is very close to the heart of our people in Japan. Under its Constitution, Japan has renounced the use of force as a means of settling international conflicts and has followed faithfully the path of peace and development through international cooperation. Japan has spared no effort to mobilize resources for the peace and prosperity of its population domestically and of the world in the international arena. Japan is a determined advocate for the peaceful resolution of conflicts and disarmament.

Disarmament is one of the top priorities of Japan's foreign policy. We are leading international efforts for nuclear disarmament and the control of conventional arms. We have adopted three non-nuclear principles and a strict policy of non-export of weapons. On the basis of its strong conviction that it is necessary to create a world without nuclear weapons, Japan has initiated the resolution on nuclear disarmament at the General Assembly every year since 1994 and has actively promoted the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty. In the area of small arms and light weapons, Japan has played a leading role in implementing the Programme of Action since its adoption in 2001. Furthermore, Japan, together with Colombia and South Africa, has initiated General Assembly resolutions on the illicit trade in small arms and light weapons.

It is our strong belief that peace dividends realized from disarmament efforts will enhance the economic and social development of populations at large and, by easing tensions, have a beneficial effect on a society as well as on its neighbouring countries. Needless to say, peace and security are not automatically given to us; we have to work for them. Constant efforts and a significant amount of resources must be brought together to achieve and sustain them. That is why we need to unite our strength and wisdom to maintain international peace and security and to work to practice tolerance in order to live with one another in peace as good neighbours.

The importance of the control and disarmament of conventional weapons is most acutely felt in post-conflict situations. After a ceasefire agreement is

reached, military expenditures often increase rather than go down. Over the course of peacekeeping and peacebuilding, our endeavours need to focus on regulating arms and disarmament in order to achieve a safer and more stable society. The Peacebuilding Commission is uniquely placed to fill gaps and work as a catalyst to marshal resources to bring about peace and development, thereby charting a new horizon for collective security.

For a conflict-torn society to be restored to a normal life and the vicious cycle of conflict and poverty to come to an end, that society needs to produce tangible changes in the everyday livelihood of the people. For instance, electricity supply should be brought to every household, and farmland should be cleared of landmines and employment generated for ex-combatants. The aspiration to social stability and durable peace will then become dominant, and people will eventually beat their swords into ploughshares.

Peacebuilding efforts are multifaceted; security sector reform, economic development and the strengthening of governance have to be tackled concurrently. National ownership and self-help are not only a norm, but an irreplaceable key to success. After peace is restored, State-building and reconciliation need to replace intolerance and hatred. The deepening of trust, mutual respect and interdependence among neighbours will prevent a relapse into violent conflict. All disputes should be settled by peaceful and democratic means.

Regional cooperation in this respect is indispensable. As many conflicts today are characterized as revolving cross-border conflicts, conflict resolution will be partial and incomplete unless it addresses the regional dimension of a conflict and the control of illicit weapons. The control of small arms and light weapons is particularly important, since the proliferation of such weapons prolongs deadly conflicts and has an adverse impact on social stability and long-term development.

The Security Council can cooperate closely with regional organizations, such as the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS), the African Union and others, and work for peace and security, through which a decline in military spending can result. For instance, we supported, through ECOWAS, the establishment of national commissions to tackle the illicit proliferation of small arms and light

weapons in Sierra Leone, Liberia and Côte d'Ivoire. We also welcome the contributions of the United Nations regional disarmament centres to promoting the regional approach. Japan will continue to support regional and subregional efforts to implement the Programme of Action on small arms, in cooperation with the United Nations.

The world is faced with a myriad of challenges that need to be addressed in order to maintain peace and promote prosperity. We are determined to contribute to collective security through Security Council membership starting next year and to continue to devote ourselves fully to maintaining international peace and security.

The President (*spoke in Spanish*): There are no further speakers inscribed on my list.

After consultations among members of the Security Council, I have been authorized to make the following statement on behalf of the Security Council:

"The Security Council recalls its primary responsibility under the Charter of the United Nations for the maintenance of international peace and security.

"The Security Council remains convinced of the necessity to strengthen international peace and security through, *inter alia*, disarmament, non-proliferation and arms control. It considers that the regulation and reduction of armaments and armed forces, as appropriate, constitute one of the most important measures to promote international peace and security with the least diversion of the world's human and economic resources.

"The Security Council notes the importance of collective security and its impact on disarmament and development, and stresses its concern at increasing global military expenditure.

"The Security Council stresses the importance of appropriate levels of military expenditure, in order to achieve undiminished security for all at the lowest appropriate level of armaments. It urges all States to devote as many resources as possible to economic and social development, in particular in the fight against poverty and the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals.

"The Security Council affirms the 2005 World Summit Outcome in which heads of State and Government recognized that development, peace and security and human rights are interlinked and mutually reinforcing.

"The Security Council stresses the vital importance of an effective multilateral system to better address, in accordance with international law, the multifaceted and interconnected challenges and threats confronting our world and to achieve progress in the areas of peace and security, development and human rights, which are the pillars of the United Nations system and the foundations for collective security and well-being. It also expresses its support for multilateralism as one of the most important means for resolving security concerns in accordance with international law.

"The Security Council expresses support for national, bilateral, regional and multilateral measures adopted by Governments aimed at reducing military expenditures, where appropriate, thereby contributing to strengthening regional and international peace and security.

"The Security Council underlines the importance of promoting norm-setting in accordance with international law as part of the efforts to strengthen non-proliferation, disarmament and arms control measures, as well as the importance of compliance with and reinforcing of the existing agreements, conventions and treaties which relate to these matters and international peace and security.

"The Security Council reiterates that cooperation with regional and subregional organizations in matters relating to the maintenance of peace and security and consistent with Chapter VIII of the Charter of the United Nations can improve collective security and therefore should be continuously strengthened. In this regard, it underlines the importance of strengthening the capacity of such organizations

in conflict prevention, crisis management, armaments control and in supporting States recovering from conflict and laying the foundation for sustainable peace and development.

"The Security Council recalls the obligation of all States to accept and carry out its decisions in accordance with Article 25 of the United Nations Charter and affirms its commitment to continue monitoring and promoting the effective implementation of its decisions in order to avoid conflict, promote and maintain international peace and security and further confidence in collective security.

"The Security Council calls on Member States, regional and subregional organizations, the Secretariat and the competent United Nations Funds and Programmes, as appropriate, to make further efforts to preserve, facilitate, develop and strengthen international and regional cooperation in the areas of arms control, non-proliferation and disarmament, through, inter alia, further implementation, development and strengthening of relevant agreements and instruments.

"The Security Council intends to continue following this issue."

This statement will be issued as a document of the Security Council under the symbol S/PRST/2008/43.

I should like to thank all participants for their contributions to this meeting. I would especially like to thank His Excellency Mr. Samuel Lewis-Navarro, Vice-President and Minister for Foreign Affairs of Panama, and His Excellency Mr. Renan Fuentealba, Special Envoy of the President of Chile, as well as other representatives.

There are no further speakers inscribed on my list. The Security Council has thus concluded the present stage of its consideration of the item on its agenda.

The meeting rose at 5.30 p.m.



Security Council

Sixty-third year

Provisional

6018th meeting

Thursday, 20 November 2008, 10 a.m.

New York

<i>President:</i>	Mr. Urbina	(Costa Rica)
<i>Members:</i>	Belgium	Mr. Grauls
	Burkina Faso	Mr. Tiendrébéogo
	China	Mr. Liu Zhenmin
	Croatia	Mr. Jurica
	France	Mr. Ripert
	Indonesia	Mr. Natalegawa
	Italy	Mr. Mantovani
	Libyan Arab Jamahiriya	Mr. Ettalhi
	Panama	Mr. Arias
	Russian Federation	Mr. Shcherbak
	South Africa	Mr. Kumalo
	United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland	Sir John Sawers
	United States of America	Ms. DiCarlo
	Viet Nam	Mr. Hoang Chi Trung

Agenda

The situation concerning the Democratic Republic of the Congo

Letter dated 31 October 2008 from the Secretary-General addressed to the President of the Security Council (S/2008/703)

This record contains the text of speeches delivered in English and of the interpretation of speeches delivered in the other languages. The final text will be printed in the *Official Records of the Security Council*. Corrections should be submitted to the original languages only. They should be incorporated in a copy of the record and sent under the signature of a member of the delegation concerned to the Chief of the Verbatim Reporting Service, room C-154A.



The meeting was called to order at 10.20 a.m.

Adoption of the agenda

The agenda was adopted.

The situation concerning the Democratic Republic of the Congo

Letter dated 31 October 2008 from the Secretary-General addressed to the President of the Security Council (S/2008/703)

The President (*spoke in Spanish*): I should like to inform the Council that I have received a letter from the representative of the Democratic Republic of the Congo, in which he requests to be invited to participate in the consideration of the item on the Council's agenda. In conformity with the usual practice, I propose, with the consent of the Council, to invite that representative to participate in the consideration of the item without the right to vote, in accordance with the relevant provisions of the Charter and rule 37 of the Council's provisional rules of procedure.

There being no objection, it is so decided.

At the invitation of the President, Mr. Ileka (Democratic Republic of the Congo) took a seat at the Council table.

The President (*spoke in Spanish*): The Security Council will now begin its consideration of the item on its agenda. The Council is meeting in accordance with the understanding reached in its prior consultations.

Members of the Council have before them document S/2008/716, which contains the text of a draft resolution submitted by Belgium, Costa Rica, Croatia, France, Italy, South Africa, the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland and the United States of America.

Members of the Council also have before them document S/2008/703, containing a letter dated 31 October 2008 from the Secretary-General addressed to the President of the Security Council.

It is my understanding that the Council is ready to proceed to the vote on the draft resolution before it. Unless I hear any objection, I shall put the draft resolution to the vote now.

There being no objection, it is so decided.

A vote was taken by show of hands.

In favour:

Belgium, Burkina Faso, China, Costa Rica, Croatia, France, Indonesia, Italy, Libyan Arab Jamahiriya, Panama, Russian Federation, South Africa, United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, United States of America, Viet Nam

The President (*spoke in Spanish*): There were 15 votes in favour. The draft resolution has been adopted unanimously as resolution 1843 (2008).

I shall now give the floor to those members of the Council who wish to make statements following the voting.

Mr. Kumalo (South Africa): We supported resolution 1843 (2008), which was just adopted, because we, too, feel that the situation in the eastern Congo, particularly around the city of Goma, is deteriorating very fast. The humanitarian situation is becoming more dire all the time. While we are pleased with the increase in the number of peacekeepers who will be sent to that part of the country, we wish to also underline that it goes along with the political process, which is also necessary.

We are pleased that the Secretary-General appointed former President Obasanjo to assist in the political process, and the good news is that the infrastructure for such a political process is contained in the Goma agreement and the Nairobi agreement, which are both available to the parties in the area to use to resolve the political situation.

We hope that the resolution will also act as an encouragement, saying that we want more troops to go in and assist people, but that it will also encourage the political process.

The President (*spoke in Spanish*): There are no further speakers inscribed on my list. The Security Council has thus concluded the present stage of its consideration of the item on its agenda. The Council will remain seized of the matter.

The meeting rose at 10.25 a.m.